United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

58th PLENARY MEETING

Friday, 19 November 1993
at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 175

EMERGENCY ACTION TO COMBAT LOCUST INFESTATION IN AFRICA: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.22)

The PRESIDENT: May I remind members that item 175 was included in the agenda of the current session on Wednesday, 17 November, and that in view of its urgent character the Assembly decided it should be considered as soon as possible.

At that time I informed the Assembly that I was scheduling agenda item 175 for this morning on the understanding that it would not be debated and that the Assembly would have before it a draft resolution for consideration. That draft resolution is now before the Assembly in document A/48/L.22.

I now call on the representative of Algeria, who will introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a privilege for me to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.22, entitled "Emergency action to combat locust infestation in Africa", on behalf of all the African States Members of the United Nations and also of the following States: Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. This list of co-sponsors, which is extremely encouraging, in itself demonstrates the great interest that is accorded to this question.

At this point, allow me to express to you, Mr. President, my great appreciation and gratitude for your valuable assistance, which will make it possible for us to take a rapid decision on this urgent issue in the General Assembly today.

The request for the inclusion of this additional item in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly is justified by the exceptional gravity and the real dangers of the scourge of locust infestation in Africa, which calls for urgent action by the international community.

In support of that request, the Secretary-General received a letter dated 15 November 1993 from the Chairman of the African Group. This letter was accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, issued as document A/48/245.

The scourge of locust infestation repeatedly afflicts vast regions in Africa, especially in the Sahel and the Maghreb regions, and on each occasion it has wide-ranging consequences for the economies of the affected countries. This year again the dimension of this devastating phenomenon was equal to and even greater than in the past. The most recent information provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) presents a detailed account of the deterioration of the situation in Africa and indicates that the anti-locust campaigns have not so far succeeded in putting an end to the infestation, in particular because of the limited means available to the affected countries. This information also

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-87219 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.58
30 November 1993

ENGLISH

depicts a decline in agricultural output, environmental degradation and a displacement of affected populations which could last for several years.

Faced with this disturbing situation, the FAO, through its Director-General, appealed to the international community on 2 August this year, alerting it to the deterioration of the situation in the affected countries and to the need to undertake immediate international emergency action to put an end to locust infestation in Africa.

Furthermore, aware of the real dangers and potential threats to nature and the economies of the affected countries, the countries of the region have reacted by engaging in a careful identification of the means of action available to them to confront the threat together. The Ministers of Agriculture entrusted with the struggle against locusts in the countries of the Sahel and of the Maghreb held an extraordinary meeting in Algiers on 27 September 1993 in order to harmonize their efforts and once again alert the international community to the potential risks and real dangers that weigh heavily on the affected countries in the wake of this natural catastrophe. The work of this ministerial meeting led to the adoption of an emergency plan of action drawn up by experts from the region on 1 and 2 September 1993 in Tunis and issued as United Nations document A/C.2/48/6. However, today it seems that the means mobilized by the affected countries are inadequate to eradicate this infestation and deal with its consequences. The support of the international community therefore becomes essential.

I am happy to note that the international community has never been indifferent to the appeals addressed to it each time this scourge has manifested itself. We do not doubt that the international community will again today discharge its duty of solidarity with the same rapidity and level of support. We welcome the support already expressed by many members of the international community for this initiative. We hope these expressions of sympathy and solidarity will be effectively and practically translated into actions that meet the expectations of the countries affected.

The purpose of the draft resolution submitted today to the Assembly is to reaffirm the commitment of the international community, in particular our developed partners and the United Nations system, to support fully the locust control programmes undertaken by the affected countries at the national, subregional and regional levels. It is intended also to involve the entire United Nations system more in this enterprise, in particular the FAO, which is called upon today to implement the emergency plan of action speedily and to undertake any complementary activities that could help bring the situation in the front-line countries under control.

Furthermore, this draft resolution, bearing in mind the deterioration of the situation, requests the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Secretary-General, to keep the situation under constant review and to organize a pledging conference as early as possible in the first quarter of 1994, with a view to mobilizing the necessary financial and other resources to provide effective assistance to affected countries in their efforts to combat the locust infestation in the African continent.

The draft resolution of which the Assembly is seized today has been the subject of extensive consultations. We hope that the international community will once again show its solidarity with Africa and that this appeal to solidarity will find its expected response in the speedy adoption of this draft resolution by consensus, enabling all our countries and the United Nations system to mobilize without delay the necessary means for the speedy implementation of the emergency plan of action in support of the affected countries.

The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.22.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/48/L.22 was adopted (resolution 48/20).

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 175?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 44

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/536)

The PRESIDENT: The report of the Secretary-General in document A/48/536 is the first comprehensive report submitted to the General Assembly since the adoption of its resolution 46/182 two years ago and the subsequent establishment by the Secretary-General of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

We are gratified to note that the Department, since its inception 18 months ago, has facilitated timely and coordinated system-wide response to the humanitarian needs of some 58.5 million people in complex emergencies in 26 countries, as well as to the victims of 107 natural disasters.

Today, we shall embark on a discussion of the challenges of coordinating such humanitarian responses. The report before the Assembly describes the lessons learned and experience gained since the establishment of the Department headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Eliasson. The report outlines important areas that require consideration by the Assembly with a view to giving further guidance and making appropriate recommendations to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to emergencies, in particular those arising from the growing number of conflicts around the world.

I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 12 noon today.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

Mr. REY CORDOBA (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On behalf of the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China, I should like to thank the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for the report introduced on 18 October on the activities of the Department relative to the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

I should like to discuss the agenda item before us today in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and of the conclusions of the coordination segment of the last session of the Economic and Social Council.

We have spent valuable time in the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly in reviewing mechanisms for coordinating humanitarian assistance in all its aspects, for, given the fact that natural disasters and other types of emergencies make no allowances for either distance or delay, we deem it essential that such assistance be as effective as possible. Humanitarian assistance is of vital importance to disaster victims, and it must therefore be provided in accordance with the principles of neutrality and impartiality and with constant respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the States where the disasters occur.

The General Assembly provided the United Nations with the instruments necessary to improve humanitarian assistance and ensure a timely response in the disaster areas. Principal among those instruments are the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), consolidated appeals, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, whose role is vital since he must not only coordinate action in cases of disaster but also consolidate appeals and, above all, obtain funding to ensure that the entire mechanism can function and can do so in a timely fashion.

The establishment of those instruments has proven to be highly effective and necessary. Natural and other disasters have increased over the past year, affecting millions of people throughout the world. More than 130 natural disasters and complex emergencies have received aid from the international community since the adoption of resolution 46/182, and we do not know how many more may have gone unnoticed since they were not the focus of international attention. I refer to those "silent emergencies" that go unnoticed because the world has become accustomed to living with them since they do not have media attention, emergencies that are for the most part caused by poverty, underdevelopment and lack of access to minimal living standards. Such emergencies must be related to the concept of rehabilitation and development after the emergency relief. They must be dealt with in the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and must be rapidly provided with resources such as those provided through the revolving Fund. There is no point in timely reaction to a disaster if the afflicted populations do not, afterwards, have the means to rebuild the minimal infrastructure necessary for life, access to basic services and workplaces, and a means of returning to their homes if they have been displaced.

The General Assembly must also consider the so-called complex emergencies, which in most cases include military interventions, political crises and peace-keeping operations. Such emergencies must be given due attention through the system, never for a moment losing sight of the attention which the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must at the same time devote to natural disasters. There are mechanisms to ensure speedy action in such cases, and we see no need for them to be linked to other organs, such as the Security Council, in order for them to receive immediate action. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are the proper bodies in the system through which afflicted countries should channel their appeals when such emergencies occur.

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs must act in accordance with the mandate given it by those two bodies

and in coordination with the other agencies in the system through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which has proved its usefulness. When an emergency involves a peace-keeping operation there is an even greater need to respect the principle of impartiality. Military action must not be linked to humanitarian assistance, and humanitarian assistance must never for any reason be conditioned or subjected to linkage. All persons affected by the conflict must receive assistance.

Although there is a need for a team coordinator, we would emphasize that in the case of complex emergencies involving peace-keeping operations the coordinator of the humanitarian operation must not be the same person as the one who is acting as coordinator of the peace-keeping operation, since otherwise neutrality or impartiality might be lost.

Coordination in the field must be improved. The afflicted country bears primary responsibility for the coordination of humanitarian aid, with the assistance of a coordinator from the United Nations system to help the Government of the afflicted country channel the aid from all of the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor countries. Such coordination, which already exists, has been successful but must nevertheless be improved.

Each agency must act in the context of the mandate given to it by the General Assembly and in areas where it has a comparative advantage. Duplication, impediments, and, in particular, the creation of any new levels of bureaucracy must be avoided.

In this context, we should like to request a review of the amount that has been allocated to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). This Fund, which was established with a base of $50 million, has proved its great usefulness to the agencies that have had access to it. Since its establishment, in May 1992, it has dispersed $52.6 million and has recovered $22.5 million. As the agencies are increasingly resorting to CERF in the initial stages of an emergency, and as the recovery of funds is slower, the resources in the Fund must be increased. We request the Secretary-General to review the situation and to submit to the General Assembly a recommendation on the extent to which the Fund should be increased, bearing in mind that the fact that greater use will be made of it will ensure that bodies such as the World Migration Organization will have access to it.

Similarly, the consolidated-appeals machinery has shown itself to be one of the most effective instruments of coordination. Consolidated appeals are based on visits to the field and on consultation with the competent United Nations bodies, such as non-governmental and other international aid organizations. We are glad that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, together with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, is currently reviewing the principles for formulating the appeals, and we hope that, in the course of this process, proper account will be taken of the needs of the countries affected. In particular, we hope that the Governments will be consulted, as, in the final analysis, it is they who know best the needs of their peoples.

We call on the donor countries to respond speedily to these consolidated appeals. While the number of appeals has increased, the response to them appears to be stagnant. The gap between requests and volunteered resources must not continue to widen, as that would result in the loss of the credibility of an instrument that has been solicited by the developing countries.

I cannot fail to mention the importance that the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China attach to the question of the continuum. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its Director must play a fundamental role in the coordination of rehabilitation and development activities in areas affected by natural disasters or other emergencies. The effects of natural disasters are felt most seriously by developing countries - not because such disasters are more acute in the South than in the North, but because poverty makes houses and infrastructures vulnerable to demolition in natural disasters.

The capacity of our countries to respond is limited and when the immediate crisis has passed millions of persons find themselves living in a state of total desolation. This is why we urge the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to continue to devote its attention to rehabilitation and development. Agencies in the system should design long-range programmes for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Department must provide resources for that purpose and must urge non-governmental and State organizations to do likewise. The emergency team must not be disbanded until there is a concrete programme for rehabilitation and development.

I should like to stress the importance that our countries attach to the question of humanitarian assistance and pledge the cooperation and commitment of the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China to strengthening coordination in this field.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Resolution 46/182 has been in effect for two years and has proved to be an indispensable and complete basic document. We welcome the achievements of the past two years in the coordination of the humanitarian activities of the United Nations, as well as the enormous amount of work that has been done by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and his staff. The Coordinator, through his commitment - often personal and painstaking - has made a worthy contribution to the implementation of the humanitarian assistance programme of the United Nations.

We have dealt comprehensively with the coordination of humanitarian assistance between the relevant United Nations agencies at last July's session of the Economic and Social Council. The Council's agreed conclusions (1993/1) on the coordination of humanitarian assistance contain a number of valuable recommendations for improving the capacity of the United Nations, through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, to make a timely and effective response to major and complex emergencies and to natural disasters.

In this context, we particularly welcome the Economic and Social Council's insistence that the Emergency Assistance Coordinator participate fully in all United Nations planning in response to complex emergencies, to ensure that the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality are observed fully in the granting of emergency assistance. The Economic and Social Council has also acknowledged its role in the aspects of humanitarian diplomacy and its duty to facilitate access to regions where emergency situations exist.

Furthermore, we support the Economic and Social Council's view on the importance of the Secretary-General's role, undertaken through the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and its conclusion that appropriate consideration, specifically in the context of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, should be given to major and complex emergencies - primary responsibility being assigned to the operational agencies, under the full control and coordination of the Emergency Assistance Coordinator. We should like to take this opportunity to invite the Secretariat to tell us how matters stand with regard to the attainment of this end. We should appreciate the Secretariat's providing us with this information before the end of the debate on this item.

It is clear that the quality of coordination in the field determines to a great extent the quality of the response of the United Nations to major and complex emergencies and natural disasters. We welcome the fact that the Economic and Social Council took note of the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. At the same time, we believe that this Committee should meet more frequently and should become the forum for genuine concerted action on emergency situations. We urge the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to carry out structural reforms with a view to transforming the New York unit into a small and effective decision-making cell, with the Geneva services discharging their operational function fully. We urge also that the role of everyone operating on the ground in emergency situations be determined speedily.

The discussion at this session of the General Assembly should deal mainly with two aspects of humanitarian assistance: first, the evaluation of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF); and, secondly, the problem of the financing of coordination arrangements during the initial phase of an emergency.

During the almost two years of its existence, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has shown its usefulness. This mechanism of self-financing has been widely used by the various agencies. In order to maintain the function and operation of the Fund it is essential that it should remain self-replenishing.

Increasing the Fund does not strike us as essential. We believe that the obligation to reimburse the Fund is not always respected as quickly as possible. Given this fact, we fear that merely to enlarge the Fund would be detrimental to its self-renewable nature. Given the needs, we do not think it is necessary to maintain a threshold of $15 million. That strikes us as being too high. Attention could also be given to shortening the time allowed for reimbursing the Fund.

As regards the field of the users of the Fund, it is clear we have no objection to including the International Organization for Migration (IOM) among them.

We have noted time and again that the problem of financing coordination during the initial phase of an emergency has been referred to. However, there has been no clear and convincing evidence that a new channel of financing should be opened. If a problem exists, it has certainly not been defined. Does it arise in a situation where there is no United Nations presence? Is it where a number of agencies are represented? What is the scope of the needs and the amounts? How far does the initial phase go? These are questions which should be answered first.

Inasmuch as there are many models of coordination in the field there must be many kinds of situations in which this need for financing exists. One cannot therefore exclude any option at this stage and it would be premature

for the General Assembly to decide right now in favour of one approach or another. We believe that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the specific framework within which this problem should be considered. The Committee should first define the problem as quickly as possible and then propose some solutions. Interim solutions could be envisaged if they are well defined in time and in scope.

Our attention should also be given to the prevention of disasters. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has a specific task to perform in that regard through the Secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Recent changes in the internal structures of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs are designed to improve the carrying out of their tasks in this regard. The European Union is pleased about that. We would however like to be better informed concerning the manner in which the tasks are allocated within the Department itself.

There is no need to prove the usefulness of a warning system. We note that many efforts are made by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to collect and disseminate information on disasters or emergency situations. In so far as many emergencies can be foreseen, the United Nations should be in a position to work out and assess the actions and programmes which it will have to carry out in good time. However, a more structured system should be set up for channelling this information and communicating it to the donor countries and to the countries in the region. We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team, in which several countries of the European Union participate, and we hope that the Operations Centre will be able to undertake its functions as soon as possible. Together with the disaster management training programme these preparatory elements will strengthen the coordination set-up of the United Nations.

The European Union hopes that at this session of the General Assembly we will be in a position to find an adequate solution to the question of the security of the staff working in the humanitarian sector. Humanitarian actions often have to be carried out in situations where there is no longer any designated responsibility and where banditry rules. This problem arises also - and often to a greater degree - for personnel of non-governmental organizations. We regret it and we condemn all action that is directed against these people.

It is difficult to guarantee preventive security in the field, but it should be possible for the Secretariat of the United Nations to guarantee an administrative security. To that end we welcome initiatives for strengthening the protection of humanitarian staff in accordance with the norms and principles of international law. We hope that these protective measures will prove satisfactory and that non-governmental organizations, for their part, will also benefit from measures of protection.

At its last session the Economic and Social Council dealt in detail with the aspect of the continuum towards rehabilitation and development. It is clear that each instance of humanitarian assistance is but a step towards the final objective, sustainable development. We note that working groups are being formed at several levels to deal with the continuum. We welcome that fact and we hope that their activities will be fully coordinated. Humanitarian assistance cannot be carried out in isolation and the actions of these groups ought also to be such that they can be placed and justified within the greater framework of development. We therefore fully support the efforts of the working group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the subject and we await the results of their work with great interest.

The European Union welcomes resolution 48/7 on assistance in mine clearance and we believe that the attention the United Nations gives to this devastating problem will contribute to sustainable development in the regions affected.

BARONESS CHALKER OF WALLASEY (United Kingdom): I am happy to associate the United Kingdom fully with the excellent statement just delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Belgian presidency on behalf of the European Union.

Almost exactly a year ago I addressed the General Assembly on the same subject we are examining today: how to strengthen the coordination of the United Nations emergency humanitarian response. I said then that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, just seven months old, was having a baptism of fire. One year on, the flames of that fiery baptism show no sign of dying out.

Many of the humanitarian emergencies that faced us then still challenge us today. In Somalia and the former Yugoslavia innocent civilians still endure the suffering that conflict brings. Almost daily the list grows ever longer. In Angola, Georgia, Sudan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Tajikistan, and in many other places, conflict blights the innocent lives of ordinary people. Those are the people who are in the wrong place at the wrong time. Those who suffer as a result of natural disasters are just as devastated as those who suffer man's inhumanity to man. The terrible earthquake that struck Maharashtra in September was a sombre reminder of that.

We welcome this opportunity twelve months on to review the United Nations emergency response, and particularly the work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. We should never underestimate the demands faced by that Department and all the United Nations humanitarian agencies. Those demands place a great strain on the United Nations humanitarian system, and indeed on bilateral donors. The staff of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the agencies work with dedication and tenacity, usually in very difficult conditions and often in danger.

We are in danger of expecting too much too quickly in strengthening the capacity of United Nations humanitarian assistance. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been in existence for just one and a half years. It has to link into numerous other agencies, some less willing than others to coordinate and strengthen the complex United Nations system. It is not the role of Member States to try to micro-manage that system. But we continue to believe that resolution 46/182, which established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, remains a sound basis on which to build. With the ever growing number of humanitarian emergencies, there is a greater need than ever for effective coordination.

There are several simple, straightforward measures that can be taken to streamline procedures and coordinate the system better. The conclusions agreed at the Economic and Social Council in Geneva in July provide a good framework for action. I do not propose to discuss those conclusions in detail; members are all familiar with them. But I will address four key elements in the framework.

The first is a more active and central role for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The Committee must meet more often if it is to fulfil its potential as the prime forum for coordination of the United Nations humanitarian system. Its decisions must become more action-oriented, and must be communicated quickly and effectively to the United Nations operations on the ground. To complement the Committee's work, the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Working Group must also increase the frequency of its meetings and improve its focus.

Secondly, adjustments should be made to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to make it more effective. The financial regulations should be reviewed to allow disbursements to be made swiftly and with the least possible bureaucratic impediment. With the right adjustments, the Fund could become an invaluable financial tool for use by United Nations agencies in the early stages of an emergency. We continue to believe that the Fund's revolving nature, which gives it essential flexibility and continuity, must be preserved.

Thirdly, the process for drawing up and presenting consolidated appeals must be improved. The consolidated appeal system is a valuable innovation. Appeals should be put together by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations at field level. This will ensure that they reflect real needs. There should also be greater prioritization within appeals so that the greatest needs are the first to be met. But it is vital that this consultative process be done swiftly. It should not slow down the availability of money to the agencies that need it most. And donors responding to the appeals have an equal responsibility to fulfil promptly any commitments they make.

Fourthly, the Under-Secretary-General and his Department should increasingly adopt the role of humanitarian advocate at every level within the United Nations system. In complex emergencies it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate humanitarian from political issues. That is why humanitarian considerations must be incorporated at every step of the decision-making process.

For those reasons, the United Kingdom firmly believes that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must continue to retain a strong presence in New York, where its personnel may have easy access to the key institutions of the United Nations.

The Department's role in promoting the humanitarian cause within the United Nations system is crucial. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs needs its Geneva base too. This is essential if better coordination between the United Nations agencies and the non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations - particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies - is to be achieved. We need to improve the capacity of each relevant part of the United Nations family to contribute to a more effective United Nations emergency response; the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was formed not to act on the ground in an emergency, but to ensure that, working together, the United Nations agencies deliver the relief so sorely needed.

Geneva will continue to be the base for those aspects of the Department's work that enable it to contribute effectively to the coordination of relief activities in the field. Resolution 46/182 envisaged the Department of Humanitarian Affairs not as an operational agency, but as a facilitating body. That is how we continue to see the Department's role. From time to time, the Department will have a coordination role to play in the field. We therefore welcome the recent agreement between the Department and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which sets out a clear framework for United Nations field

arrangements in emergencies. It is important that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs now focus and prioritize its work in support of its core tasks, so that it does not overstretch its already limited resources.

Here I would like to pay tribute to the unsung heroes of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. These are the people who have ben working quietly away, making real progress in implementing many of the specific recommendations set out in resolution 46/182: the disaster mitigation branch and the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which do sterling work in disaster preparedness; the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Stand-by Team; the UNDP-Department of Humanitarian Affairs Disaster Management Training Programme; and the staff who have set up the Emergency Stockpile Register. These are areas of work that do not have media appeal. Yet these quiet successes show that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs can and does work.

That is why the United Kingdom continues to support fully the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. As the Assembly has heard, this support is shared by all the States of the European Union. The establishment of the Department and the appointment of the Emergency Relief Coordinator were innovative steps. We still believe in those innovations. We, as an international community, owe it to those who suffer in emergencies to make the United Nations humanitarian system work better. Together with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations agencies and the international and non-governmental organizations, we will strive to achieve that aim.

Mr. ALBIN (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation wishes first to thank the Secretary-General for his report, and to thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for the additional information he has provided.

My delegation fully supports the statement made this morning by the current Chairman of the Group of 77.

Few activities more clearly reflect the great worthiness of the purposes of the United Nations than the provision of humanitarian assistance. Two years ago, after considerable negotiation, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182, establishing a framework for the activities of the United Nations system in coordinating and distributing such assistance.

Mexico reiterates its full support for the spirit and the letter of the principles contained in that resolution. We are, however, concerned to note that there is a tendency to give priority to so-called complex emergencies over natural disasters and other emergencies. Above and beyond the discussions and perceptions of what constitutes an emergency, the United Nations must adhere strictly to the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, with full respect for the sovereignty of the States to which aid is given. This is the only way to preserve the truly humanitarian nature of assistance.

Decisions relating to humanitarian assistance must be taken solely by the relevant bodies - the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly - because of the basically social and humanitarian nature of the action taken. Abiding by principles and respect for the responsibility of these bodies will enhance the international community's trust and confidence in the humanitarian nature of the assistance provided by the Organization.

My delegation considers that the United Nations would only partially meet its objectives if its outlook were restricted to assistance. We believe that a large part of the effects of natural disasters could be reduced, and some of the causes of the so-called other emergencies could be diminished, if the United Nations contributed towards achieving a more equitable world order.

In this context, we cannot hide our concern that in recent reports of the Secretary-General less attention has been given to rehabilitation and development. This situation must be corrected. We call upon the Department and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to restore the priority which in our view these areas should retain in plans and actions.

I should now like to emphasize the importance of strengthening coordination of humanitarian assistance, both in the field and at Headquarters, under the leadership of the Department. We recognize the measures that various United Nations agencies have taken to enhance coordination. We hope that these efforts will continue and that the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee will grow in importance. In the field, the country concerned bears the primary responsibility for the general coordination of humanitarian assistance. The Resident Coordinator must play this role in inter-institutional cooperation within the United Nations system.

Mexico considers that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must make a more dynamic contribution to activities carried out within the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, in connection with which an international conference will be held next year in Yokohama, Japan.

Finally, we also consider that the agenda item on coordination of humanitarian assistance and the related reports of the Secretary-General could be debated every two years by the General Assembly, rather than annually, as it has been so far.

Mr. HOMANN-HERIMBERG (Austria): This last decade of our present century may well be remembered as a period of time that, in the aftermath of the cold war, was characterized by the break-up of nations, ethnic conflicts and devastating natural disasters. Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Caucasus region, and Bangladesh are only some of the examples. Unfortunately, the list is long. We deplore the toll that natural and man-made disasters have taken on human life and the particularly severe economic and social impact they have had on developing countries.

In the discussions preceding the adoption of resolution 46/182 Austria strongly supported the establishment of new mechanisms for the United Nations system's response to emergencies, whether natural or man-made. Since then the unprecedented number of humanitarian emergencies world wide have put the new arrangements under severe strain as regards managerial, operational and political issues.

With the review of the coordination aspects during the summer session of the Economic and Social Council, a certain stock-taking has already taken place, and it is reflected in the agreed conclusions. However, it is up to this session of the General Assembly to review the effectiveness of the current arrangements and therefore to measure achievements against the objectives intended by the "mother resolution".

While the resolution may not have been perfect in some respects, we believe that its guiding principles continue to serve as a sufficient basis and that it provides instruments for the "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations".

We are encouraged by the political atmosphere surrounding questions of humanitarian assistance. While the negotiators of resolution 46/182 had to grapple with difficult questions of sovereignty, in the implementation phase the true problems have turned out to be more problems of resources and coordination, although we must not minimize the other problems that remain, particularly that of access.

With regard to coordination, we recognize that over the past two years progress has been made, as is also indicated in the Secretary-General's report. However, more must be done to bring the United Nations reaction to emergency situations into line with the growing challenges. In this respect, we believe full implementation of the Economic and Social Council conclusions could go a long way, and we hope that their review at the regular session in 1994 will be accorded the required time.

Through the establishment of the position of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, recognition was given to the importance of the subject and public awareness was considerably enhanced. We pay tribute to Under-Secretary-General Eliasson for putting a number of functional issues higher up on the political agenda of Member States. In this respect I should also like to mention demining, an area on which the General Assembly focused explicitly for the first time only during this current session; internally displaced persons; security of humanitarian personnel; and advocacy for the humanitarian mandate of the United Nations.

The creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was meant to provide a support structure for the Coordinator. At the same time, it created a bureaucracy which, by its very nature, is not necessarily a facilitator in the response to emergencies.

The division of responsibilities within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and between New York and Geneva remains unclear. Many inefficiencies have resulted, and so have misunderstandings and frustration. We encourage the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue his consideration of this aspect, taking into account the comparative advantages of New York and Geneva.

We also suggest that, once a decision is taken, the Secretary-General should authorize the Emergency Relief Coordinator to delegate to the Department's Geneva Office authority commensurate with its responsibility. At the same time, we hope that further improvements in coordination and management mechanisms can be made at both Headquarters and field levels, and that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will draw on staff that is truly experienced in emergency management.

We believe that it must be the Department's foremost objective to provide leadership on behalf of the Secretary-General and to function as facilitator and coordinator for the international community. This also means that the Coordinator and his Department must receive the fullest cooperation in partnership with the other players in the system.

Particularly in situations where the political and humanitarian dimensions are interlinked, the relationship between humanitarian emergency assistance, political matters and peace-keeping is of critical importance. In

such situations, it is also necessary to give attention to the need to safeguard the neutrality of emergency assistance.

It is obvious that cooperation in partnership is required for the proper functioning of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and its Working Group. This, indeed, is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination, and it should therefore proceed in an action-oriented manner on policy issues related to humanitarian assistance and formulate coherent and timely United Nations responses to disasters and major, complex emergencies.

As all members of the IASC are equally responsible for its effective functioning, we encourage them to intensify their consideration of subjects such as division of labour, field coordination arrangements, information management, disaster management training, gaps in the response to emergencies and the all-important continuum from emergency assistance to long-term development.

As regards this continuum, we believe that the question ought to be addressed in a more operational way within the United Nations system, as well as between United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations, leading to an integration of this concept into United Nations development activities.

As we have already observed, demands on the international community for emergency assistance have reached unprecedented levels. At the same time capacities to meet them are overstretched and the resources for response are not unlimited. More attention will therefore have to be paid to cost-reducing measures for relief operations and to cost avoidance through early warning, preventive diplomacy and preventive development.

While the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has proved its value, we share the opinion that its operation could be improved by streamlining its procedures and by ensuring timely repayment of funds advanced.

As regards the consolidated inter-agency appeals process, we have noted from the Secretary-General's report that greater attention will be given to the priorities accorded activities resulting from comprehensive and realistic projections of relief requirements.

The Secretary-General's report clearly shows that sudden-onset natural disasters and similar emergencies continue to be a major preoccupation for the international community. We concur that it must be the Department's primary objective to play a catalytic role in the promotion of disaster-mitigation strategies - that is, prevention and preparedness - particularly in developing countries.

Within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction constructive work has already been accomplished, and the forthcoming World Conference in Yokohama will provide a further impetus.

With regard to the important question of response to disasters, a number of measures to strengthen stand-by capacities have been taken. Austria is pleased to be participating actively in some of these, such as the establishment of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team. In this connection, the Austrian Government hosted and organized, together with the Department, a simulation of relief efforts after a major earthquake; the simulation was known as "Exercise '93".

This and other stand-by capacity-building measures should not be limited in their application only to use in response to natural disasters. In this context, preparation of operational guidelines for the use of military and civil defence assets to deliver relief assistance following large-scale emergencies should also be mentioned.

In the aftermath of the recent events in Georgia, members of the Austrian armed forces joined in an operation sponsored by the Department to bring urgently required assistance to the suffering civilian population.

Two years ago, the international community unequivocally declared that humanitarian assistance is of cardinal importance for the victims of disasters and emergencies, and that such assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

The Secretary-General himself has reminded us that the right to humanitarian assistance remains a fundamental issue, and that leadership in humanitarian diplomacy is needed to address it on behalf of the United Nations operational organizations; obtaining access to emergency-affected populations where circumstances prevent the provision of humanitarian assistance was rightly underlined in this connection.

We fully agree with this emphasis, but what is the reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina? This winter, access to the victims is going to make the difference between life and death. International law and international humanitarian law have set clear standards in this respect too. It is simply unacceptable that they are not being observed.

We have noted in this respect that Mrs. Ogata, in her capacity as Chairperson of the humanitarian issues working group of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and in the presence of the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, yesterday signed an important declaration together with representatives of the parties involved. We join Mrs. Ogata in her appeal to the parties to honour their commitments to respect human rights, international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles.

We are convinced that only determined and decisive political action by Member States together with the Secretary-General can pave the way for the victims of conflicts and disasters world wide to receive the help to which they aspire and to which they are entitled.

Here I should like to express our respect and admiration for the relief workers of the operational agencies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, and also of the non-governmental organization community, who, under often intolerable security conditions, are trying to relieve human suffering. We pay a tribute to those who have had to give their lives in the performance of their duty.

Mrs. ALBRIGHT (United States of America): I welcome the opportunity to address the General Assembly today regarding the pressing subject of humanitarian assistance.

The community of nations should do all it reasonably can to relieve the suffering resulting from natural and human-caused disaster. But meeting this responsibility is growing more difficult. Devastation wrought by nature's fury is more than matched by the fury and folly of humankind. Ethnic and other subnational conflicts have created unprecedented demands for United Nations help. The number of displaced persons and refugees - the international homeless - is at an all-time high. The fabric of the international relief system has been stretched taut.

Over the years United Nations agencies with a relief role have saved countless lives. There are enormous grounds for pride in what has been accomplished. But when we contemplate current and future challenges there are no grounds for complacency.

A look around the world tells us that the infectious consequences of conflict continue to spread. Africa alone is home to a dozen ongoing insurgencies and 6 million refugees. Fighting in the Caucasus has prompted Iran to set up refugee camps inside Azerbaijan. Armenia faces a second harsh winter, cut off from adequate supplies of food, water and power. Hundreds of thousands are threatened in Georgia and Tajikistan. More than 2 million Afghans and 1 million Iraqi Kurds remain in need. And in Bosnia the war continues and the suffering grows worse.

The quantity of resources available to respond to these emergencies has not kept pace with rising demand. There is a risk of donor fatigue and potentially even donor collapse. Already the gap between needs and responses in many locations is enormous.

All this makes efficiency a matter of much more than bureaucratic interest. Let us never forget that the stakes are not statistics or politics or camera placements and news stories. Rather, what is at stake is life or death for blameless children and grandparents and mothers and fathers. Their fate depends upon our choices. My Government believes that the United Nations system must choose to become more efficient and professional in coordinating its disaster-relief programmes.

The effort to reform United Nations humanitarian programmes extends back at least to the creation of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) in 1972. UNDRO was supposed to improve coordination, eliminate duplication and put someone clearly in charge. It did not. So two years ago we created a Department of Humanitarian Affairs, with new tools to do the same jobs and more.

Although the Department's efforts have been spread thin by the new wave of humanitarian emergencies, its work has begun to take root. Consolidated appeals have been established. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund has helped speed aid to victims. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee could become an effective coordinating forum for United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations. The effectiveness of these tools will be enhanced further as the conclusions reached at the Economic and Social Council this past summer are implemented.

As I will describe in greater detail, my Government is prepared to help bolster the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in conjunction with reforms within that Department. We are pleased that Under-Secretary-General Eliasson is taking steps to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department, and we fully support him in this effort. We also believe that the Department's capabilities need to be reinforced in three critical areas.

First, the Department must have the recognized leadership role, the authority and the resources to ensure that the United Nations rapid response to emergencies is properly coordinated. The Department must be the party

responsible for system-wide performance in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in complex emergencies.

Secondly, the Department must have a modern information system encompassing all emergency requirements. This includes providing data on assessed needs and tracking the capabilities and contributions of agencies and donors in response to those needs.

The United States already provides funds for the International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System. As part of a joint initiative with Japan, the United States is now prepared to make two new commitments as the Department of Humanitarian Affairs implements its reforms. First, we will give the Department the equipment necessary to establish a modern information network system in New York which can be linked to Geneva and the field. Secondly, we will provide five portable satellite communications earth stations for links with field offices in emergencies. The total value of this new United States contribution exceeds $500,000. We are pleased that the Government of Japan is able to join us in contributing to this critical information function, and we invite others to do so as well.

Thirdly - and finally - the Department needs the resources necessary to coordinate a rapid response by the United Nations to an emergency where insufficient capacity exists in the field. The Department must determine when field deployments are required, including its own when necessary, and must be responsible for seeing that sufficient resources are put in place. Accordingly, we urge that the Department be given access to the interest earned by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund for this purpose until a permanent solution is found.

Let me also mention the role Under-Secretary-General Eliasson has played. He has established a new Department in the midst of an unprecedented increase in humanitarian emergencies. He has worked to help those at risk - whether from drought in southern Africa, from civil violence in the wintry hills of Georgia or from other forms of catastrophe So I am particularly pleased to announce today these new contributions to support the Department.

I would also like to address myself to the United Nations humanitarian agencies, which I hope are represented here today. As I have said, they all have our gratitude for their dedication and extraordinary hard work. However, the United States believes that the Department is not the only part of the United Nations humanitarian system that needs to be strengthened. We urge the United Nations humanitarian agencies to cooperate with the Department and to accept its leadership in coordinating responses to complex emergencies. That may require some loss of customary independence, but it will result in major gains in overall effectiveness.

It is also vital that the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs ensure that the humanitarian dimension is incorporated into the planning and execution of political and peace-keeping missions. The delivery of emergency relief is often among the primary purposes of such a mission. It is both necessary and appropriate, therefore, that the United Nations official responsible for humanitarian affairs be involved in developing and implementing the response. Such an integrated approach should ensure that the peace-keeping, political and humanitarian elements of United Nations operations do not work at cross purposes.

The role of the Secretary-General is also critical. In the end, his leadership will determine whether or not the United Nations system coordinates smoothly in responding to humanitarian crises. We urge him to take up this challenge forcefully.

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs planning effort must also emphasize early intervention. Droughts may be inevitable, but famines resulting from drought are not. Human conflicts are inevitable, but destructive wars resulting from such conflicts are not. Early intervention requires good information, which means United Nations Departments and agencies must pool their data. It requires a willingness on the part of the United Nations to respond quickly and appropriately to threatened emergencies, and it requires decisive leadership both from United Nations officials and from Member States.

Finally, planning for disaster relief must emphasize the continuum between emergency help and development aid. Whenever we respond to an emergency, we should begin preparing for the day when the primary mission changes from relief to recovery. Today there is no better example of this need than Somalia. I myself saw that relief efforts in that country have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Agricultural lands once ravaged by violence are now under cultivation. Children who seemed to have no future are now returning to school. Basic health needs are being given attention. Somalia is entering the recovery phase.

The test now is whether Somalis are willing and able to take the steps that will make an enduring recovery possible. The conference scheduled for 29 November in Addis Ababa is a key opportunity. If Somali leaders demonstrate their own commitment to peace, which is the prerequisite for development, international donors will respond. If they fail to do so, the space for effective international action will diminish.

The United States is prepared to lead by example. At the Addis Ababa conference, we shall announce an assistance package for Somalia of approximately $100 million in new and programmed funds. These funds will be used for humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation projects in those regions where progress on political reconciliation and security has been made. These funds will be available if, and only if, Somalis make real progress in creating a secure environment and achieving political reconciliation. We urge other donors to participate actively in this effort.

The international relief system is under grave strain. We should respond by strengthening the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and emphasizing the kind of comprehensive approach that complex emergencies demand. We must also work together to overcome the obstacles created by political and military conflict to the delivery of emergency relief.

Although it is sometimes difficult to separate the humanitarian component from other components of a peace-keeping mission, there is a difference. A combatant force may well refuse to cease hostilities, to disarm or to demobilize out of a legitimate concern for survival. But there is nothing legitimate about using force to starve or freeze innocent civilians. There is nothing legitimate about denying medical aid so that children lie screaming as legs are amputated without anaesthesia. There is nothing legitimate about extorting food or other supplies meant for humanitarian relief. There is, in short, nothing legitimate about denying access to the means of human survival.

This issue of access for relief convoys and aircraft will be especially critical in Bosnia this winter. For many it may mean the difference between mere hardship and certain death. The Bosnian people are weaker today than they were last year. Their capacity to endure hardship has been sapped. If fighting continues, the number in need will be far greater and the gravity of their need far more severe than they were last winter.

The international community is responding. The Sarajevo airlift has now gone on longer than the Berlin airlift 45 years ago. Pilots from 20 countries have flown more than 6,000 flights over the course of 500 days. America alone has contributed more than $400 million to the relief effort. The United States Department of Defence has developed a new food ration that is high in nutrition, can survive a 10,000-foot air-drop and requires no water or fuel for preparation. And 80 per cent of the air-drops in Bosnia have been from American planes.

United Nations agencies have made plans for this winter; so have the non-governmental organizations. We are all prepared and preparing to do more. The United States is prepared to make a major contribution to address needs during the coming winter in Bosnia, and we hope this will encourage other donors to make similar contributions. We congratulate Mrs. Ogata on the achievement of an agreement between the parties in Bosnia to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance by suspending hostilities and allowing free and unconditional access to those in need.

We must strive to convince those of all factions and nations, in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, not to interfere with the delivery of emergency aid. One of our great challenges is to establish the principle that the United Nations has an inviolable right to deliver humanitarian relief and that the victims of violence have an equal right to receive it.

In closing, I want to thank the Assembly once again for the opportunity to discuss these issues here today. Because of the very great challenges we face, it is as important as it has ever been that we work together to advance our common goals. Because the need is so great, our efforts, too, must be great. We must rise above institutional jealousies and move beyond the promise of reform to the reality of change. And we must believe that each child fed, each refugee housed and each family reunited will inspire others to join with us in reducing the toll of tragedy in this troubled world.

Mr. SAMUELSSON (Sweden): I am pleased to make this statement on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The United Nations has, in one way or another, been involved in the search for solutions to the alarming succession of international crises in recent years. In a rapidly changing world, Member countries have felt the urgent need to develop new instruments to address these crises.

Resolution 46/182, adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, is one of these new tools which the Nordic countries felt was urgently needed. It has provided the United Nations with an overall framework for the international community's coordinated response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.

On the basis of that resolution, important achievements have been made during the last two years. The necessary institutional arrangements have been put into place with the creation of the post of Emergency Relief Coordinator, as well as with the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency

Standing Committee. At the same time, a strengthening of the financial mechanisms has been accomplished with the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and the use of consolidated appeals.

Resolution 46/182 also refers to the relationship between the humanitarian and the political activities of the United Nations. It clearly states that the Emergency Relief Coordinator should actively facilitate the access of operational organizations to emergency areas. In accordance with the agreed conclusions reached by the Economic and Social Council this year, the Coordinator should also fully participate in the overall United Nations planning of responses to complex emergencies. By its very nature, this central task requires close cooperation and coordination between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and other Departments of the United Nations Secretariat. Such active contacts are promoted, *inter alia*, through the existing United Nations interdepartmental task forces.

The experience gained in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia has shown the close and significant links, in major complex emergencies, between humanitarian assistance and political processes. It has also borne witness to the central principle that humanitarian efforts must always be guided by humanitarian needs. It is essential that full support be given at the highest levels in the United Nations to the Emergency Relief Coordinator as a focal point and advocate in ensuring that the humanitarian dimension, particularly the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance, are fully taken into account.

The task now facing the United Nations is to make full use of the instruments at hand to address the challenges posed by complex emergencies and natural disasters. The further strengthening of these mechanisms must also be part of a continuous effort to improve the efficiency of the work of the United Nations. Reinforcing the United Nations in this area is a task not only for the Secretary-General and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs: United Nations agencies must take full responsibility for this process and ensure at all levels of these agencies that coordination with other relevant bodies is sought and achieved. The wholehearted commitment of donor and recipient countries and of participating non-governmental organizations is also indispensable.

The agreed conclusions of this summer's session of the Economic and Social Council give compelling guidance for the enhancement of the United Nations response to emergencies. They are fully in line with the position of the Nordic countries and should be thoroughly implemented. As stated in the agreed conclusions, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should function as the primary mechanism for the coordination of policies related to humanitarian assistance among agencies and for the formulation of coherent and effective responses to complex emergencies.

The Economic and Social Council's conclusions also established that coordination should be field-oriented. In this context, the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator is crucial, as stated in General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/199. While the Department of Humanitarian Affairs does not and should not have its own operational capacity in the field, it must be able to rely on the operational agencies of the United Nations and other partners represented in the field. As past experience has shown, notably in Africa, it is often necessary to strengthen considerably and modify the institutional structure of the United Nations in countries affected by complex emergencies. In such circumstances, it is imperative that the organizational and reporting arrangements be clearly defined, as well as the responsibility and accountability of each participant. Further improvements in this regard are called for.

At the session of the Economic and Social Council, it was also stressed that efforts must be intensified to promote preparedness, capacity-building and contingency planning for humanitarian emergencies.

Disaster-mitigation measures should be built into development programmes as an integral part of the continuum from disaster to rehabilitation. Preventing disasters, as well as reducing their impact and adverse consequences, is an efficient and cost-effective way of responding to the devastation that threatens to occur in emergencies.

In a situation of rapidly increasing numbers of humanitarian crises, increased attention must be paid to the financing of relief operations. The financing instruments created by resolution 46/182, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and the consolidated appeals, must be used more effectively to support relief operations. Measures to make more funds available in the CERF should be based on an evaluation of its present functioning and projected requirements. The steps which are needed - in order at least to increase the turnover velocity of the Fund - include swifter donor response to consolidated appeals and prompt reimbursement by the agencies. It is essential to safeguard the revolving nature of the CERF.

Mr. Gujral (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As regards the consolidated appeals, it should be borne in mind that they are much more than just a

financial mechanism. These appeals should primarily be a result of inter-agency programming, with decisions on priorities between different activities, and should serve as the instrument for coordination between the recipient country and the United Nations agencies as well as being a mechanism for reporting to donors. The consolidated appeals have been improved considerably over the last year. However, it is crucial that the principles adopted by the Economic and Social Council be implemented, particularly as regards preparing the appeals in the field, their selective use in complex emergencies, a comprehensive and realistic assessment of relief requirements, the establishment of realistic priorities, and the consistency of relief strategies with longer-term development requirements, including the addressing of root causes. The consolidated appeals should also contain information on coordination arrangements and on the use of the CERF.

The importance Member States attach to the issue of humanitarian emergency assistance and the responsibilities and tasks of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be adequately reflected in the biannual programme budget. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs must be given flexibility to organize the Department in all aspects, including reallocation of personnel, in the most efficient way. It is of overall importance that the Coordinator be able to select his staff with a view to ensuring competent leadership at all levels of the Department.

The safety and security of relief personnel are of deep concern to the Nordic countries. Conditions and actions that endanger the delivery of humanitarian assistance and put the security of international staff and other relief workers at peril constitute despicable violations of fundamental principles of international law and must be strongly condemned.

Access for humanitarian relief and questions related to mine clearance, the internally displaced and the demobilization of soldiers are of paramount importance in the context of addressing complex emergencies. It is now high time that these issues were decided upon through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee structure and that the agreed solutions were swiftly implemented.

Finally, the Nordic countries have been among the strongest supporters and advocates of a United Nations that has been strengthened in order better to respond to humanitarian emergencies. We have seen the progress made in this field as an integral part of the overall effort of invigorating the social and economic sector of the United Nations. However, what has been done so far is not enough. In spite of achievements, the United Nations system in the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance does not function satisfactorily. All concerned parts of the United Nations system need to demonstrate a stronger commitment to addressing the problems and urgent tasks in this field. The clear and reiterated requests from Member States to the United Nations must be translated into decisive and rapid action in order to make the structures which have been put in place work as intended. With that in mind, the Nordic countries urge the United Nations - the Secretariat and the operational agencies involved in humanitarian emergency assistance - to take all necessary steps to implement without delay the agreed conclusions from this summer's session of the Economic and Social Council. The victims of natural disasters and complex emergencies cannot wait any longer for the United Nations to get its house in order.

Mr. KHARAZZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General and to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for their tireless efforts in mobilizing international assistance for the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Despite enormous technological advances, people still find themselves at the mercy of nature. Every year earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters ravage homes and leave behind terrible destruction. The 108 cases of major natural disasters documented since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182 are an astonishing number.

At the same time, the end of the cold war has resulted in the emergence of many new nations as well as in the collapse of governmental structures in some countries. Consequently, war and civil strife have entailed much loss of life and property throughout the globe. These new developments, which necessitate a more active United Nations involvement, have in turn expanded the mandate and scope of United Nations humanitarian operations. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that in the past two years the international community has witnessed 26 complex emergencies.

With this unpredictable rise in the number of natural disasters and complex emergencies, the United Nations is faced with emerging challenges in the implementation of its humanitarian role. Yet the system cannot play its crucial role of providing early warning, assessing needs, preparing appeals and implementing relief activities unless it is well equipped with the essential means, which include financial and material resources as well as qualified personnel.

The availability of adequate financial resources is critical in ensuring the success of the system's rapid and coordinated response to natural disasters and other emergencies. In this context, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has, since its establishment in May 1992, contributed effectively to the alleviation of the suffering of the victims of emergencies. Given its advantages, the Fund is being increasingly utilized by United Nations operational organizations to meet urgent relief requirements. In view of the frequency of its use - on 17 occasions - as well as our intention to expand its scope to include other international organizations, serious thought should be given to a possible increase in the size of the Fund.

The current time-lag between pledges to consolidated appeals and actual contributions is yet another argument in support of our position that the size of the Fund should be increased. In this respect, we support the agreement reached at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council to consider increasing the size of the Fund. However, that does not weaken our advocacy of the proposal with regard to quick reimbursements of resources withdrawn by operational organizations. In other words, we believe that, in addition to an increase in the size of the Fund, donor countries should be encouraged to respond more quickly to the consolidated appeals launched by the operational organizations in order to maintain the smooth functioning of the Fund. Furthermore, to expedite the entire process of emergency assistance there is a need for more flexibility in utilization of the Fund.

The fact that only 56 per cent of the requirements of the appeals launched to date have been met makes it necessary - as the Secretary-General has proposed - to review the current funding mechanisms and explore improved resource-mobilization strategies for humanitarian assistance programmes. Another critical problem is lack of enthusiasm among donor countries to fund non-food aid requirements, a point that has obstructed the coherent implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes.

In view of the demanding tasks entrusted to it, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should also be provided with qualified personnel and administrative resources. In our opinion, General Assembly resolution 47/168 has already provided a legislative framework for action. Unfortunately, despite benefiting from the secondment of staff by operational organizations in the system, national agencies and non-governmental organizations, the Department still lacks the required human and administrative resources to discharge its responsibilities. Moreover, 65 per cent of the Department's staff are funded from extrabudgetary resources, thus making it necessary to look to other possibilities for financing its costs.

Improvement of the existing stand-by capacity mechanisms is a key element in rapid response to disasters and emergencies. Recognizing the potential contribution of regional stand-by capacities to effective relief operations, resolution 47/168 requested the Secretary-General to explore the possibilities and advantages of the establishment of regional warehouses. Regrettably, that request has not received due consideration in the Secretary-General's report; there is only a very general reference to the question of emergency stockpiles at national, regional and global levels, in paragraph 42. In order to have a clear picture of various ways and means of improving the current stand-by capacity mechanisms, the Secretary-General's next report to the General Assembly should contain, *inter alia*, the following items: a survey of existing facilities for storage of relief items at regional and global levels; recommendations on how to improve the existing facilities; measures to make available to Member States a list of the most frequently used disaster items in emergency situations; an analysis of the advantages of establishing regional warehouses, including promptness and cost-effectiveness; and an analysis of regional warehouses possibly complementing existing facilities at the global level.

At the same time, we support the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in preparing operational guidelines for the use of military and civil defence assets to deliver relief assistance following large-scale national disasters.

The destruction caused by disasters is often tremendous. Given their vulnerability and limited disaster-prevention abilities, most developing countries may find that a natural or man-made disaster costs decades of investment and development activities. Nevertheless, some disasters can be prevented, or their adverse consequences may be controlled. Thus our focus on the provision of relief to the affected countries should not divert attention from work on disaster-mitigation programmes, which in most cases are highly cost-effective.

We share the Secretary-General's view that in order to minimize effectively the adverse effects of disasters, mitigation strategies should be incorporated into development programmes. Recognizing the importance of disaster prevention, the General Assembly, in resolution 46/182, called for the provision of sufficient and readily available resources and for the strengthening of the mitigation capacities of disaster-prone countries.

With the escalating number of complex emergencies, international attention has been shifting from sudden-onset natural disasters. What worries us is that the response to such complex emergencies could be at the expense of the response to natural disasters. Therefore, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should continue to address natural disasters with the same sensitivity.

Another vital consideration in the provision of relief services is that often a few days after the occurrence of a disaster the emergency situation becomes less immediate. Survivors are found and are temporarily resettled, and this is misconstrued as the end of the emergency. But the most important tasks remain. They include the restoration of basic services, such as schools and health care, and the reconstruction of damaged property, all of which require additional resources. Meanwhile, in many cases the human suffering continues after the relief process has ended. Accordingly, international support must be structured in such a way as to expedite the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the affected areas.

While we commend the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in ensuring active participation by the World Bank in the preparation of consolidated appeals, we feel that there is room for more involvement by the Bank in the provision of continuum-form relief support for development. In this context, we welcome the decision by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee at its meeting in July this year to establish a task force to formulate policy recommendations concerning the continuum and to invite relevant development organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to participate in this endeavour.

The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, to be held in Yokohama, Japan, will provide us with an opportunity to review thoroughly, in the light of recent developments, the activities undertaken at the national, regional and global levels, in line with the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. We hope that the Conference, while promoting the cause of humanitarian assistance, will contribute to the international efforts to curb the adverse consequences of natural disasters.

I should like to say in conclusion that the success of humanitarian operations largely depends on respecting the guiding principles in resolution 46/182. In this regard, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States must be fully respected. At the same time, the system should ensure the neutrality and impartiality of emergency assistance, as any attempt to politicize the delivery of assistance to the victims of a disaster might well lead to the failure of the entire operation.

Mr. LAVROV (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* As the world faces new emergencies, the responsibility of the United Nations for the mobilization and coordination of concerted multilateral action to provide urgent humanitarian assistance is increasing. The experience of recent years has shown convincingly that timely and adequate emergency assistance is very helpful in the context of the wider efforts to solve military and political conflicts and to secure economic reconstruction and development.

The Organization carries out its humanitarian affairs work at different levels - in the Security Council, in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council, as well as through intergovernmental organizations directly involved in humanitarian emergency assistance. The delegation of the Russian Federation welcomes the active participation in these activities of non-governmental organizations, a number of which carry a heavy burden.

The situation I have described is proof of the complex, system-wide nature of the tasks confronting the Organization in the field of humanitarian assistance and the need for additional efforts to strengthen coordination on the basis of resolution 46/182, and particularly, its guidelines.

The agreed conclusions approved by the Economic and Social Council in July 1993, following discussion of the coordination of humanitarian assistance, were a step forward. We should like to highlight in particular the Council's conclusions concerning the need to ensure that the Secretary-General has a leading role in strengthening the coordination of work at the field level, strengthening the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and establishing a general framework for action to ensure an effective transition from preventive aid to economic reconstruction and development. These agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council should be accepted for implementation by all the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system.

The Secretary-General's report (A/48/536) contains useful information and well-founded proposals on measures to improve United Nations activities in the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance. We note with satisfaction that in the relatively short period of a year and a half the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, headed by Under-Secretary-General Eliasson, has done much to improve coordination within the United Nations system. We call on the Department to continue its efforts in this direction, thus ensuring a harmonized combination of its coordinating role with the practical operational capabilities of the organizations and specialized agencies.

The Russian Federation's State Committee on Emergency Situations has been cooperating closely with the Department in carrying out humanitarian operations in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the former Yugoslavia and other hot spots.

We welcome the measures that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is taking to strengthen the potential of the United Nations to react rapidly to sudden-onset emergencies. To be more precise, we should like to highlight such measures as the establishment of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) Stand-by Team, the efforts to establish a Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, the Secretary-General's appointment, in the case of a number of emergencies, of special country coordinators and the creation of the field-level Disaster Management Teams.

In our view, the following urgent steps could help to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian emergency assistance: a more active use of the capabilities of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to strengthen a single, agreed approach to humanitarian operations of agencies of the United Nations system, under the leadership, and with the coordinating role, of the Secretary-General; the streamlining of the system of financing humanitarian operations in the field, in particular at the initial stages of their implementation; the strengthening of measures aimed at ensuring the security of staff participating in humanitarian operations through concerted efforts of the organizations of the United Nations system and the authorities of the host countries; and increased attention to the most vulnerable groups of the population when humanitarian situations are worsened in countries against which Security Council sanctions are applied.

We support the idea of strengthening the system of early warning of emergencies - not only of natural disasters, but also of other cataclysmic events which cause humanitarian crises. Here we see substantial potential for interaction between different units of the Secretariat, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the science and business communities. In essence, what we are talking about is a further enhancement of the legal and practical development of humanitarian diplomacy.

We should add that timely humanitarian emergency assistance not only helps to mitigate humanitarian crises but also promotes a rapid transition to economic reconstruction and development. There is a need for an expeditious elaboration of measures to improve interaction between the agencies of the United Nations system in order to ensure an effective transition from emergency relief to the carrying out of the tasks of reconstruction and development. It is clear that the mandates and comparative advantages of the different organizations and agencies must be fully taken into account.

The Russian delegation hopes that the problems of reconstruction and development will be duly reflected in the agenda for development now under preparation by the Secretary-General.

Mr. YAVORISKY (Ukraine) *(spoke in Ukrainian; interpretation from Russian; text furnished by the delegation):* Clearly it will come as no surprise to anyone that I, as the representative of the Ukraine, in speaking to the agenda item "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations", will speak mainly of Chernobyl.

Seven and a half years after the first and, thank God, the only explosion of a nuclear reactor in the history of mankind - the one at Chernobyl, which emitted radioactivity of 50 million curies into the environment - the disaster has become somewhat historically distant for the world. After all, there have been several immense earthquakes since then, and other tragedies: the Persian Gulf, the Yugoslav tragedy, which continues still, and drought in Somalia. It would seem that we have stopped being surprised by the tragedies that are carrying off thousands of our fellow human beings around the world.

It is hardly worth competing as to whose tragedy is worst. All of them constitute our common loss. Yet the Chernobyl disaster - and we in the Ukraine, with increasing terror, feel it - has expanded in time and space. It lurks in the slow relentless death of those who crossed the 30 kilometre zone of hell between 1986 and 1989 - the immediate liquidators of the danger hidden in the fourth block - and those who have been affected by the Chernobyl radiation, and it also lurks in the generations to come. It has reached even the genetic code of the nation.

A sociological survey of school children evacuated from Pripyat, a town of 50,000 atomic workers, showed that 92 per cent of those surveyed had a psychological complex, believing there was no future.

In the Ukrainian Parliament I was the head of an interim commission to investigate the causes of the Chernobyl disaster. We all came to the conclusion that the main culprit of the 1986 tragedy was the totalitarian communist system - a system of lies, of secrecy and of lawlessness. Nuclear power in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was an offshoot, a bastard, of a military State with a militarized economy. The Chernobyl nuclear power station, all its blocks, defective in design,

worked for the atomic armament of the former USSR, producing plutonium.

We must do everything to ensure that the world remains convinced that non-democratic, totalitarian regimes should not exploit the risky attainments of civilization.

We know that in 1986 all Members of the United Nations strove to help us, but their humanitarian, technical and moral assistance was tactlessly ignored, not by the peoples of the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia but by the political leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We are still paying most dearly; we are paying in human lives.

The world shuddered when it learned about Chernobyl, and learned that 100 kilometres from the reactor, in Kiev, our lightly clothed children - my daughter, a first-grader, was among them - were marching in May Day processions. Today we can assert with full conviction that Chernobyl was one of the detonators that brought about the downfall of totalitarianism in the USSR and of the Soviet Union itself. We can also assert that even if the communist empire had not fallen apart in 1991 it would still have not been able to resolve even one of the many Chernobyl problems. It was no longer capable of doing that, economically, scientifically, technically or morally.

Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine are sovereign States. They were not born from sea foam, like Venus, but they have risen from the ashes like a Phoenix. For that reason all of us today bear the birthmarks of that system. To get rid of them is extremely difficult. It requires time. Seventy years of false communism, of fear, of the suppression of initiative, of thought, of civil freedoms, are slowly disappearing from the thoughts and souls of the Ukrainian people. Next March we will be conducting new parliamentary elections finally on a multiparty system and I, as the Chairman of the Democratic Party of the Ukraine, am convinced that there will follow political and economic reforms that will enable Ukraine to set out on the road of a market economy and democracy.

All that will be tomorrow. Ukrainian society is already ripe to ensure that this will be its choice tomorrow. But if we do not at least mitigate the consequences of Chernobyl today, tomorrow may never come, because the Chernobyl catastrophe is not only our yesterday or today; it is also our tomorrow and will be so for many decades to come.

The Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson, who was awarded the Chernobyl Cross of Honour by the Ukrainian Parliament and Government, has said that in 1986, when he was in his own country after the Chernobyl rain, he saw farmers destroying contaminated milk. That was in faraway Sweden. Yet we and our children have been drinking contaminated milk, because what is being produced in the non-contaminated zones of the Ukraine is not enough even for the children. In Ukraine 7.4 million hectares of the best soil in the world have been contaminated with more than 0.1 curie of radiation per square kilometre.

Even a strong and economically flourishing State could not deal alone with the consequences of a catastrophe like Chernobyl, so imagine the situation for the moribund post-communist economy of Ukraine, where 20 per cent of our meagre national budget is now eaten up by Chernobyl. And the limited funds allocated for Chernobyl for the year had been exhausted by October. Thousands of adults and children will not be able to move to permanent housing in uncontaminated areas. The shortage of medicine and ecologically pure produce will grow worse, and the families of the liquidators of the Chernobyl disaster will be virtually without social services.

Last May, Mr. Jan Eliasson visited Ukraine, including the Chernobyl area the site of the tragedy. He saw the heart-rending, dead, depopulated city that had housed the plant workers, to which it will be hardly possible to return for centuries. In the 30-kilometre zone, he saw abandoned villages, mutated forests, millions of tonnes of radioactive mud. But he simply did not have enough time to look into the eyes of the thousands of children suffering from leukaemia or thyroid cancer, or into the eyes of helpless physicians: we lack even one specialized clinic to save the victims. And even the most piercing eye would be unable to discern the hidden danger lurking in the Dnieper river, which provides drinking water for 32 million people in Ukraine, or in the fields and meadows and the Polessye bogs that have been contaminated by radionucleids.

We appreciate that, having obtained its independence, Ukraine joined the world community not as a rich country, ready to provide generous assistance to others. For the time being, we need assistance ourselves, and that is the bitter truth. We have turned in our anguish to the United Nations, that world-wide institution of mutual understanding among the peoples of the world, an organization of which we were among the founding Members.

The United Nations wields great authority in the Ukraine, particularly with respect to resolving the Chernobyl problem. First of all, the United Nations has not allowed Chernobyl to fade into the past or to become a second-rate example of "yesterday's" ills of mankind. Many specialists, from many countries and international organizations, have come to our country. They have

assessed our losses; they have determined the extent of the damage in the affected areas; they have mapped out measures for solving certain problems. Medical equipment and medicine has come to our country; children from affected areas have been brought to other lands for rest and treatment.

I take this opportunity on behalf of my delegation to reiterate our sincere gratitude to all the countries, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and scientific and business circles in many countries: to all those who have come to help us in our time of travail.

We are grateful for the humanitarian assistance in the form of ecologically pure products from countries including the United States of America, Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Canada and others. The Government of Germany has provided, as humanitarian assistance, a great deal of technology and clothing for the affected regions and to support Ukrainian agriculture. This has served, first and foremost, as moral support for our people at a very difficult moment in its history: help at a time of true need is doubly valuable.

This, of course, does not resolve even a small fraction of our current problems. We understand that letting Ukraine grow into a rich, strong democratic State at the very epicentre of Europe is something that only we 52 million peace-loving, hardworking people in Ukraine can do. We have a third of the world's finest black earth; we have vast mineral deposits; we have an enormous raw-materials base; we have potential fuel and energy resources. Soon, wise economic reforms will be carried out, including privatization: 90 per cent of the economy remains a weight around the neck of our young State. In that connection, I would note that the majority of the State sector is bankrupt.

But there is not much time left for Chernobyl and its victims. Today they can still be saved, if the world community helps us with medical equipment and medicine, with diagnostic and treatment medication, and with cardiovascular and cancer medicine. Rather than constantly sending us medicine and disposable syringes, it would be wiser to transfer, permanently and on a mutually advantageous basis, the technological equipment for the production of these things. We are ready to cooperate in such an endeavour; we can guarantee in law the protection of foreign capital.

I should like to stress that the United Nations resolution on this question must leave Chernobyl at the focus of the international community's attention. The United Nations must remain the catalyst and unquenchable beacon for Chernobyl. If this problem is forgotten and shifted to a regional, European level and then perhaps to the Eastern European level - and later even to the level of the Commonwealth of Independent States - we will lose yet another portion of our faith in human solidarity. At a time when the United Nations is enjoying a renaissance, and when the last totalitarian empires and regimes are collapsing, if part of the rich countries' vast expenditures on armaments against yesterday's militaristic USSR were used to eliminate the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, we would all gain, and democracy in the world most of all.

On the conceptual level, the Ukrainian delegation wants to reaffirm its commitment to basic principles for the provision of humanitarian assistance through the United Nations, as set out in resolution 46/182; these include respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the country or countries to which assistance is provided, humanitarianism, neutrality and impartiality. In particular, by applying these principles, the humanitarian aspect must be taken into account in peacemaking and peace-keeping operations.

We fully share the Secretary-General's conclusion in his report that emergency assistance, reconstruction and development should be viewed as a continuum, and that emergency-assistance operations should not obscure the longer-term process of development and should not lead to a syndrome of dependency among the recipients. Other guidelines for the design of programmes and strategies for this continuum, as set out in paragraph 133 of document A/48/536, deserve support.

We believe that the conceptual basis of United Nations provision of humanitarian assistance will be further developed at the forthcoming World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

Of late, the attention of the world community has been increasingly focused on the need to protect United Nations staff as it carries out humanitarian operations. We agree with other delegations about the importance of securing legal protection for United Nations staff, and we believe it necessary to prepare and adopt an international convention to define the status of United Nations peace-keeping personnel and establish a machinery for protecting it at every stage of an operation. We are prepared to be among the sponsors of such a document.

I have one more thing to say. Before the Assembly stands a man who battled with all his forces in the Ukrainian Parliament for the decommissioning of the Chernobyl atomic power station, which is a wounded beast and therefore extremely dangerous. The decision to keep

it in operation was adopted by a mere two-vote majority, and that was only because a cold winter lies ahead, with a difficult energy crisis. But I am convinced that a new Parliament, to be elected in March next year by the people of independent Ukraine, will take the decision to shut it down once and for all.

Yesterday the Supreme Rada of the Ukraine, with 254 votes in favour and nine abstentions, ratified the START I Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol to that Treaty. The Parliament of the Ukraine took this historic step in spite of the fact that our expectations of receiving reliable guarantees for the security of the Ukraine were in vain; that the promises of assistance in nuclear disarmament cannot be regarded as adequate to meet our needs; and that the problems of compensation for the thousands of warheads of the tactical nuclear weapons handed over to Russia for destruction have not yet been resolved.

For this reason the Parliament entrusted the President with the holding of discussions on these questions, and only after their positive resolution will the exchange of letters of ratification take place. The Parliament asked the President to work out a time-frame for the liquidation of the armaments scheduled for reduction under the agreement and to ensure monitoring of its implementation. After these conditions, as set out in the reservations, have been met, the ratification letters will be exchanged.

The Parliament has stated quite clearly that Ukraine is ready to speed up the process of eliminating nuclear armaments in its territory if its legitimate security interests are taken into account. With the entry into force and implementation of the START agreement, the way is open for the resolution by the Supreme Rada of the question of the Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We would like to thank the Assembly for having understood our pain and our problems, and for the fact that it will vote unanimously in favour of a draft resolution that will ensure that the Chernobyl bells will not fall silent in the world. They not only toll for the dead, but also call to the conscience of the living. As long as we hear those bells we belong to mankind.

Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh): I am very happy to have the opportunity to speak on this important agenda item. I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for a very useful report (A/48/536) on it.

The recent dramatic increase in natural and man-made disasters and civil and ethnic strife has made an effective and coordinated response by the international community absolutely essential. Bangladesh believes that provision of humanitarian assistance in an adequate and timely manner can create a positive environment for improving security conditions and can provide an opportunity to address underlying problems. An appropriate and prompt response to emergency situations is crucial to assist victims, reduce tension and create a climate conducive to the resolution of the underlying political problems.

Natural disasters and other emergencies put additional pressure on the economies of developing countries that are suffering from the chronic problems of poverty and underdevelopment. We strongly feel that humanitarian assistance should address the root causes of emergencies. Otherwise, recurrence of emergencies cannot be prevented and States will not be able to grow out of what we call the relief dependency syndrome. It is therefore very important that transition from relief to rehabilitation and long-term sustainable development programmes be ensured.

The interrelationship between humanitarian activities and those relating to peacemaking and peace-keeping is well recognized today. Delivery of humanitarian assistance has indeed become a vital part of United Nations peacemaking and peace-keeping endeavours. This was also highlighted by the speakers at a recent Conference on Conflict and Humanitarian Action, held at Princeton University and jointly organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Peace Academy and Princeton University. My delegation hopes that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will work in close cooperation with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs in formulating the United Nations humanitarian response to complex emergency situations.

Bangladesh believes that humanitarian diplomacy, as it has been conceptualized and as it is being carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, forms an important part of preventive diplomacy. In this regard, Bangladesh deeply appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General in sending Under-Secretary-General Jan Eliasson as his Special Representative to Bangladesh and Myanmar to assist in the repatriation of Myanmar refugees from Bangladesh.

The recent increase in the number of natural disasters and the consequent damage caused to the economies of the countries concerned need the urgent attention of the international community. The vulnerability of the developing countries to natural disaster and its recurrence in those countries is a matter of great concern. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has a special responsibility in this regard. Developing countries suffer more, and the damage to their economies is greater, because of their weaker infrastructures and low capacity to

respond immediately and effectively to disaster situations. International solidarity is therefore essential to reduce the consequences of natural calamities in the developing countries.

I fully agree with the view of the Secretary General, as expressed in his report, that in many cases population pressures and poverty have led people to live in areas already exposed to natural and man-made hazards. Therefore, the broader problems of poverty, pollution, population and so forth should be addressed in order to prevent and limit the consequences of such diasters. I also fully agree with the Secretary-General that:

> "mitigation measures should be built into development programmes and be an integral part of the continuum from disaster to rehabilitation. Disaster-prone countries must at the same time be provided with the necessary resources to strengthen their mitigation capacities." *(A/48/536, para. 20)*

The collection and dissemination of information and the early warning systems of the United Nations for natural disasters must be further strengthened. It should be noted that the impact of natural disasters are felt most during the first two or three days. Any delay in reaching the affected people may cause thousands of deaths. Therefore, the prompt dispatch of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Stand-by Team and the provision of the necessary resources are crucial.

My delegation would like to commend the Geneva Office of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on its work in the field of natural-disaster relief assistance. The United Nations can help disaster-prone countries in developing disaster-mitigation programmes and early-warning systems. There is a need to enhance the indigenous capacity of Member States to face natural disasters effectively. The joint Department of Humanitarian Affairs-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Disaster Management Training Programme for disaster-prone developing countries is a positive step in this direction.

We also welcome the Department's initiatives to improve disaster preparedness by setting up a Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities. Bangladesh would be happy to share its own experience in handling natural disasters with disaster-prone countries or United Nations agencies.

Bangladesh feels that the designation of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction is a timely and laudable initiative of the United Nations to promote awareness of the importance of disaster reduction. We feel that sustained efforts should be made to support a strengthening of the capacities of vulnerable countries and to promote the transfer of technology and information exchange. Research in this field and training for personnel from the developing countries should also be strengthened with a view to making the Decade a success.

Security of humanitarian personnel should receive adequate attention from us. The task of humanitarian relief personnel in many areas of the world has become increasingly difficult in recent months. Some personnel have even lost their lives in carrying out their missions. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the safety and security of personnel engaged in humanitarian relief work all over the world. Bangladesh would support any effort in that direction.

Bangladesh feels that coordination of United Nations emergency relief assistance can be more effective if it is harmonized with national relief efforts by taking into account national needs and priorities. This could be ensured through the proper integration of United Nations relief operations with those mounted by national authorities. National experiences and capacities should be taken fully into account in dealing with special and recurrent emergencies. United Nations field agencies should work in close cooperation with national agencies.

We are glad to learn that since its creation the Central Emergency Revolving Fund has been used in a number of emergency situations with very positive results. With increasing demands on the Fund as a result of the proliferation of crises and with a certain delay in replenishing it, we feel that there is a need to review its size. Steps should be taken to ensure prompt action to help people requiring immediate assistance. Bangladesh feels that attempts to expand the scope of the Fund should be commensurate with efforts to increase its size.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate that, in providing humanitarian assistance, the United Nations should be guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. We believe that the United Nations is best equipped to play the central role in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance to the affected regions of the world. Bangladesh will extend all support and cooperation to the efforts of the United Nations in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/6 of 16 October 1990, I now call upon the Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. SANDOZ (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) *(interpretation from French):* The International Committee of the Red Cross is pleased to have the opportunity today to share with the Assembly some of its thoughts on the subject of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance, so as to promote better understanding of the role currently being played by the ICRC.

As far as armed conflicts are concerned, the international environment is nowadays characterized by a growing number of nationalistic, ethnic and religious conflicts, which often take place in a context of great deprivation. The existing structures are deteriorating or even collapsing, making it extremely difficult to identify chains of command and to conclude agreements with parties that are capable of imposing them on the combatants of whom they are supposed to be in charge. As a result, humanitarian emergency activities are becoming more and more complex and dangerous.

Despite these difficulties and the immensity of the task, the number of humanitarian agencies has fortunately increased, and the United Nations has considerably increased its involvement in emergency humanitarian aid.

The magnitude of the needs and the enormous logistic and security problems involved in meeting them have made it more than ever necessary to combine our efforts and work together as closely as possible. This requires not only closer cooperation between the humanitarian agencies themselves, but also more consultation between those agencies and those responsible for keeping or restoring peace. The interaction of the political and military activities of the United Nations, on the one hand, and its humanitarian activities, on the other, does sometimes lead to confusion; this should be carefully examined.

Working towards a clarification of roles and improved mutual understanding through an ongoing process of consultation should make it possible to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian emergency activities in terms both of quality and of quantity. The point is, in fact, not only to avoid duplication of effort, but also to enable each agency concerned to carry out its own mandate as well as it can. In this respect, the existing consultation mechanisms are useful and could probably be further improved.

I should like to refer briefly to these mechanisms in order to make the ICRC position clear.

While not losing sight of what it is - and what we have in mind here is not the ICRC's individuality, but, rather, constructive complementarity - the ICRC intends to pursue and even step up its cooperation, in which it is already broadly involved, with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The procedures for consultation should, however, remain flexible so as not to impede rapid decision-making in emergencies.

In the field, the ICRC believes that, from now on, the ongoing dialogue between its delegates and United Nations evaluation missions should be put on a systematic footing, with a view to strengthening consultation and promoting greater openness in our operational approaches.

We should also like to point out that cooperation between the ICRC and the United Nations is now almost automatic in the preparation of the consolidated appeals launched by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

If this concerted approach is to be strengthened, we must pursue and develop dialogue and cooperation in various important areas on which joint consideration has already begun. This view is shared by the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and by their International Federation.

I now turn to the basic principles of this cooperation, beginning with mention of the preparation of a code of conduct for organizations taking part in disaster relief operations, which was drafted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, together with the ICRC and in consultation with various non-governmental organizations. This code was recently approved by the Movement's Council of Delegates at a meeting in Birmingham. The code's ethical and operational principles should help consolidate the foundations for joint action by all humanitarian bodies and thereby preserve the neutrality and impartiality which are essential to the credibility of humanitarian action.

Next I should like to touch on the efforts made world wide by the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in preventing disasters and in preparing for their consequences. These efforts are of course part of a global coordination by the international community.

The Economic and Social Council this year focused its attention on the problem of ensuring a smooth transition, or "continuum", as it is known, from the emergency phase of assistance programmes to the reconstruction phase. The ICRC, anxious not to create a dependency situation extending beyond the emergency phase, has adopted a comprehensive operational approach in assisting and protecting civilian populations. This approach provides a wide range of specialized services aimed at alleviating all the different types of suffering afflicting those peoples; such services include tracing missing persons, arranging for

the exchange of family messages, medical assistance, sanitation projects, managing prosthesis workshops, distributing seed and livestock vaccination programmes. The ICRC is therefore participating with great interest in various working groups which are tackling this major issue, both in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme.

We should also like to commend the efforts currently being made to deal on a global basis with the problem of land mines and the particularly terrible human suffering they cause. We hope that they will result in a less compartmentalized strategy with respect to restricting or banning such weapons as well as to the fields of disarmament, mine-clearance, war surgery, and physical, psychological and social rehabilitation. The ICRC is very directly concerned by this issue. Its surgeons deal daily with the horrible wounds inflicted on children, its orthopaedists provide artificial limbs and re-education for their recipients, and its representatives comfort and assist the family members of the victims. That is why earlier this year the ICRC organized in Montreux, Switzerland, a multidisciplinary symposium of experts and it intends to pursue consultations on the matter through January 1994. We mus. continue to mobilize the international community.

We should also like to mention the vital importance of dialogue and of the clear allocation of tasks in order to deal more effectively with the plight of displaced people, who now total about 25 million world wide. Their rights in situations of armed conflict must be observed. Like the civilian population in general, they are entitled to protection. In other cases, their legal status must be clarified. But, it is most important that in all these cases cooperation and coordination and, above all, humanitarian action be strengthened.

Finally, the ICRC is following closely the study now being carried out on the security of personnel of the United Nations and of non-governmental organizations working in the field, on whom the provision of humanitarian assistance often depends. The use of armed escorts must continue to be an exceptional measure and cannot be considered a permanent solution. It is therefore essential that the emblems that protect emergency humanitarian operations, in particular those of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, be universally respected. For this, humanitarian endeavours must project a clear image of independence, of impartiality towards all victims and of neutrality towards all combatants.

But what can be done when every means available to humanitarian diplomacy has failed? The major crises of recent years have shown that the rejection of all humanitarian principles constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, States must act in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Against this background, the ICRC must remain vigilant as to the possible impact on humanitarian work of political measures ranging from peace-keeping operations to those intended to restore peace, which impose much greater constraints.

The ICRC fully understands the reasons underlying an approach which seeks to combine all efforts to foster peace. However, it is convinced that there must be a special place for what is required by the logic of humanity, for victims must be aided without delay, regardless of political considerations. Suffering cannot wait. Emergency relief has a logic of its own, independent of all other factors and enshrined in the universally recognized rules of international humanitarian law.

Similarly, it is important to draw a distinction between the political responsibilities of States and the responsibilities attached to humanitarian activities conducted by neutral and impartial agencies. Indeed, there are two quite separate functions here: one is that of the police and the judiciary, stemming from the duty to see justice done, to ensure respect for the law and to punish transgressors; the other is that of the aid worker, whose sole concern is to protect and assist all victims in the name of humanity.

The ICRC has the advantage of being a known quantity, because of its restricted mandate, its ability to act as a neutral intermediary and its long experience of working in the field of armed conflicts, where it has always done its best to show complete independence and impartiality. Its sui generis nature we are convinced, enables it usefully to complement all the other efforts made in an effective, concerted approach.

Creating space for humanitarian work does not imply isolation, since encouraging States to show greater respect for international humanitarian law is obviously essential for the carrying out of humanitarian activities.

In this connection, we cannot conclude without mentioning the International Conference for the Protection of Victims of War, which took place from 30 August to 1 September 1993 in Geneva, under the auspices of the Swiss Government. The Conference's Final Declaration, adopted by consensus, constitutes, in our opinion, the starting point of a renewed commitment by States to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. In the field, these words must now be translated into practical action to prevent suffering and protect victims. The coordination of humanitarian work is not merely a

question of structure. It is primarily a state of mind which must be manifested by the will to act with the sole purpose of assisting as effectively as possible all those who are in need.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.

United Nations

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

59th
PLENARY MEETING

Friday, 19 November 1993
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 44 (*continued*)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/536)

Mr. CHEN Jian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations contained in document A/48/536. Our appreciation also goes to Mr. Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for his introductory remarks. I would now like to state our views on the question under discussion.

We are pleased to note that since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182 in December 1991, during the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, coordination of the humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations has been further strengthened, and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has played a very important role in this. The operation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the launching of the consolidated appeals have fully shown that the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution has been substantially implemented. We support the efforts made by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in this regard and appreciate the work done by Mr. Eliasson in carrying out resolution 46/182 of the General Assembly.

The Chinese delegation attaches great importance to the activities of humanitarian assistance. We believe that all victims of disasters, natural or man-made, deserve to be assisted generously and in a timely manner by the international community in the spirit of humanitarianism. It should be pointed out that there has been an increasing number of damaging natural disasters in recent years. In his briefing to Member States on 9 November concerning this agenda item, Mr. Eliasson observed that, according to incomplete statistics, the damage caused by natural disasters in 1991 amounted to $44 billion, and the figure for 1992 was as high as $62 billion. This shows that further strengthening of relief assistance to disaster areas has become a serious question which deserves everyone's attention. Of course, attention should also be given to areas stricken by man-made disasters. But where should the priority of assistance work lie? This is a question that merits deep reflection.

The biggest problem in humanitarian assistance is the lack of funds, which is also one of the difficulties encountered in the coordination work. In his briefings, Mr. Eliasson has noted that, as a result of the tremendous loss of life and property caused by various disasters, the need for assistance, especially non-food assistance, is huge. We appeal to all countries capable of doing so to provide, in the spirit of humanitarianism, more assistance and especially non-food assistance so that people in the disaster areas can receive timely relief to alleviate their sufferings.

There is a close relationship between emergency assistance to and the rehabilitation and sustained development of the disaster areas. We are happy to see that this has already attracted attention in responsible

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-87225 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.59
1 December 1993

ENGLISH

quarters. We support the idea that the United Nations agencies and donor countries, while providing emergency assistance, should also fully consider the rehabilitation and long-term development of disaster areas. We also support Mr. Eliasson in regard to the need for further strengthening coordination in this connection.

Money is an important means of strengthening coordination. With no money in hand, coordination will remain an empty word. General Assembly resolution 46/182 provides for the setting up of a Central Emergency Revolving Fund of $50 million to ensure sufficient assistance in the initial stages of disasters. This is an important tool for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in strengthening coordination. In view of the Fund's operation over the past year or more, we believe it to be weak in two regards. First, the Fund has not been fully utilized; limits set by various regulations have prevented eligible United Nations agencies from fully utilizing the Fund. Secondly, the total amount of the Fund is too small to respond adequately to the emergency demands created by combating so many disasters in their early stages. We therefore endorse the adoption of more flexible measures in utilizing the Fund and support the increase of the Fund through voluntary contributions.

In coordinating humanitarian assistance activities the Department of Humanitarian Affairs must abide by the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as set out in resolution 46/182. In the provision of economic and emergency assistance, the sovereignty of the recipient country must be fully respected. We maintain that no strings should be attached to humanitarian assistance and that the provision of such assistance must be based on the consent of the recipient countries.

Mr. SILALAHI (Indonesia): Let me first express my deep appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for his insightful introduction in the Second Committee to the comprehensive and informative report on the agenda item now before us.

The report prepared by the Under-Secretary-General is in response to resolution 46/182, on strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system. Obviously, as the annex to that resolution reveals, there are many facets and dimensions that must be addressed. Among those that require our close attention are: the guiding principles, areas of prevention and preparedness, the need for ensuring a continuum between short-term and long-term objectives, the recommendations on the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and a central register of specialized personnel and equipment and supplies, as well as other measures designed to enhance the stand-by capacity of emergency relief.

With the end of the cold war, ethnic conflict and violence have returned with a vengeance. Increases in civil strife and underdevelopment have resulted in an unprecedented upsurge in humanitarian emergencies. Those emergencies, combined with the already-increasing natural disasters, environmental degradation, pervasive drought and acute economic conditions, have spread humanitarian crises to vast populations and areas of the world and have severely strained the capacity of the United Nations to handle them. Moreover, we regret to note that humanitarian relief activities are being carried out under increasingly dangerous conditions that have already resulted in relief-worker casualties and even death. The changing scope and nature of those challenges, among others, attest to the relevance of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/168.

We are pleased to witness the ongoing adaptation being made within the United Nations, in keeping with those two resolutions, in meeting such unprecedented challenges. In many of the complex emergencies that are currently plaguing the world, humanitarian assistance has been an integral part of efforts to maintain peace and security. So too the United Nations efforts towards peace-keeping and peace-building have facilitated the access to and delivery of humanitarian assistance. The response of the United Nations, therefore, should involve not only the traditional relief agencies but also the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, so that an integrated, comprehensive and enduring outcome can be achieved. To this end the report underlines the crucial need for an effective mechanism at the heart of the United Nations system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, therefore, must ensure that effective coordination and collaboration take place between those Departments and their agencies.

In addition, and in keeping with the terms of General Assembly resolution 46/182, emergency relief, rehabilitation and development should be treated in an integrated fashion. In this context too we can agree with the Secretary-General on the need to link humanitarian relief with the political aspects of peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Infrastructural requirements, reconstruction and rehabilitation, along with emergency relief, should form a comprehensive, integrated approach linking short-term and long-term goals.

My delegation also fully concurs with the agreed conclusions reached by the Economic and Social Council when it addressed the humanitarian assistance issue at its substantive session in July of this year. In this regard I refer in particular to the need for the Emergency Relief Coordinator to participate fully in the overall planning of

responses of the United Nations to complex emergencies. The Coordinator should also serve as the humanitarian advocate and ensure that the principles of the humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance are upheld.

Preparedness and prevention are other crucial elements for the success of the humanitarian response. For this purpose the Disaster Management Training Programme is central and, jointly managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, is important to national capacity-building so that vulnerable countries are prepared for emergencies and better able to mitigate their effects.

Closely related to the imperative of preparedness and ensuring an effective early response is the need for the more dynamic use of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) at the early stages of emergencies. That would serve both to help contain crises and to contribute towards their solutions.

As for the consolidated-appeal process, it has been proved a success over the past 18 months. We therefore believe that this approach should continue and that the practice of putting the appeals together at the field level with inputs from all players concerned should be maintained. While such appeals are a key component in the overall strategy for meeting immediate humanitarian needs, we believe they should also be compatible with long-term rehabilitation and development requirements, as well as with the need to address the root causes of emergencies.

In conclusion, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has continued to strengthen and coordinate its response to the increasing number of emergencies and disasters and has striven to enhance the mechanisms for implementing resolutions 46/182 and 47/168. Obviously, however, natural disasters and complex emergencies have been increasing exponentially.

What is now crucial is that serious efforts be made to reverse the process, to prevent the further escalation and spread of such situations. All endeavours to this end should be collective, as diminishing resources are not commensurate with the task. At the same time, although more and more funding is required for short-term disaster alleviation and emergency relief, long-term objectives should be bolstered by such means as development and disaster prevention and preparedness, including national-capacity building, as the best guarantee of enduring stability. We therefore agree that we must have the courage to translate humanitarian ideals into tangible assistance for all those in desperate need. Such assistance is essential to the task of combating the enormous toll in terms of human lives and property, but, as a means of advancing development, it is also an essential component of the foundations of lasting peace and security.

Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The delegation of the Republic of Belarus is participating for the first time in the debate on this agenda item. We should like to underline the growing importance of the subject and the increasing involvement of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes in the consideration and solution of humanitarian problems, irrespective of the reasons for their having arisen.

This situation has prompted a very clear reaction. On one hand, events in the world demonstrate clearly that the General Assembly decision of two years ago concerning the need to expand the humanitarian activities of the United Nations and to strengthen coordination in this area was timely and important. On the other hand, we are concerned at the fact that the United Nations and its Member States have to give increasing priority to the matter of responding to humanitarian situations created not by natural disasters or abnormal phenomena - for example, technological catastrophes - but by crises caused by the uncivilized behaviour of certain States, civil wars, ethnic tension and violations of human rights.

We believe that the reasons for this disturbing trend should be analysed in a profound historical context that demonstrates the link with all the economic, military, political, social, cultural, natural and geographical factors. However, an analysis of these reasons is an exercise for another time. At this stage we must consider realistic measures that constitute an effective United Nations response to the consequences of the inability to prevent the emergence and development of complicated and other humanitarian situations.

The variety of reasons for and the scale of tragic events and emergency situations in the world necessitate further strengthening of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and enhancement of the role of the Under-Secretary-General, who is the person responsible for coordinating United Nations activities in the humanitarian sphere. We believe that it is important that there should be more coordination between the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the work of other Departments - in particular, the Department of Political Affairs, in respect of preventive diplomacy; and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, in respect of reaction to complex humanitarian situations.

Our delegation wishes to draw attention to some aspects of the strategy that has been worked out and implemented by the United Nations and its Secretariat, as

well as of operational humanitarian activities which, *inter alia*, were dealt with in the debate that took place at the summer session of the Economic and Social Council and which are being raised again in this debate. These issues are of concern to many Member States.

The first of them concerns problems of coordination between emergency humanitarian assistance at the very early stage and assistance at the rehabilitation and development stage. We feel that, even now, the number of need-assessment missions and the number of appeals for joint action and mobilization of resources are greater than the resources of the United Nations permit. Bearing in mind the proliferating and worsening crises in various parts of the world, as well as the limited resources of the Organization, the Secretariat, in keeping with the mandate given by the General Assembly, must concentrate its efforts primarily on complex emergency situations.

We agree in principle with those delegations that believe that decisions with financial implications for all Members arising from the provision of emergency assistance in situations where humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping activities have to be combined should not be taken without the participation of the General Assembly. Otherwise, those taking the decision should be the ones to pay.

Our delegation agrees entirely that it is necessary to enhance measures to protect the personnel involved - particularly, those people participating in complicated and dangerous emergency humanitarian operations. We also think that it is necessary that humanitarian assistance be provided in a manner fully consonant with the principles of humaneness, neutrality and other guiding principles that have been agreed to and are contained in the annex to resolution 46/182.

Governments and representatives of donor and recipient States must play a greater role in the formulation of specific policies, strategies and tactics, as well as programmes and projects for operational activities in the case of emergency situations. Here, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and, if need be, the Inter-Agency Working Group must be more open so that interested representatives of States and countries' Permanent Representatives at the United Nations in New York or in Geneva may be enabled to participate. We feel that there should be clearer procedures for the use of national experience and the personnel resources of Member States, including co-option of personnel to prepare policy documents and discuss questions of substance and other activities within these two inter-agency coordination mechanisms. Evaluation missions should also be more open so that donor States and non-governmental organizations might participate.

With regard to the location of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs - in particular, its transfer from New York to Geneva - we think that the solution of this rather technical problem should have no implications for the regular budget. Specifically, use should be made of technical devices such as the modern facilities for communication between Geneva and New York and for contact with other centres where regional multilateral organizations and other United Nations partners are located, and of the potential of the United Nations to make temporary use of communications facilities in the field.

The second aspect relates to the elaboration of a United Nations strategy for the mobilization of voluntary resources and for more task-specific use of the principle of comparative advantages, as well as movement away from emergency assistance to more independent development through the rehabilitation stage.

The rehabilitation stage is now the greyest area in this concept of ensuring the transition. We share the view that organizations, programmes and funds that provide development assistance, including the Bretton Woods agencies, could join forces here with those organizations that are responsible for providing emergency humanitarian assistance.

Here, in order to have a smoother, more consistent and faster transition from emergency assistance to long-term development we believe that it would be a good idea for the infrastructure and other rehabilitation projects, which are very effective at the rehabilitation stage, to be carried out and financed with the participation of these organizations, funds, programmes and agencies.

With regard to the role of the United Nations at the rehabilitation stages, that role we think should be limited to inter-agency coordination and providing working information to interested Governments and organizations. Once again I stress that taking into consideration the large number of appeals for concerted action in providing emergency humanitarian assistance, we must bear in mind the:

> "... serious resource problems that are affecting the ability of the United Nations system to deal effectively with many humanitarian emergencies." *(document E/1993/90, 21 June 1993, para. 33)*

We believe that special questions relating to machinery for reserve and emergency financing for humanitarian assistance should be discussed in depth and

comprehensively in the Fifth Committee before the Assembly takes a decision on them. Procedures for speedy disbursement and recruitment in emergency situations should be given urgent consideration as well as the financing of emergency assistance coordination groups, mechanisms for taking decisions to meet the costs of humanitarian assistance from peace-keeping operation resources, and the use of resources from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and other non-specific resources, as well as the desirability of setting up a mechanism for the collective covering of coordination expenses by the agencies.

Our delegation hopes that at the forty-eighth session some clarity will be introduced to these questions for meeting coordination expenditures and that the Fifth Committee will make recommendations regarding additional guidelines on these questions.

The third aspect deals with the differences in approach and the priorities given the dramatic proliferation of emergency situations. This is an important matter for discussion in the Second and Fifth Committees. Our delegation shares the view that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should react properly to any situation that has caused a humanitarian crisis.

The relevance of this can be demonstrated by looking at the special problems of Belarus where, unfortunately, we have an acute humanitarian situation. In addition to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, our traditional foreign economic relations have been disrupted and structural changes have been brought about in our shift from a centralized economy to a market economy, and we have had an unprecedented flood in my country. Our delegation thinks that there should be a thorough discussion in the main bodies of the United Nations of additional preventive measures and measures for reacting to complex humanitarian situations in newly independent States, not only in areas of ethnic tension or political instability.

In conclusion, I stress that preventing States from breaking up and social structures from disintegrating, preventing civil war, human rights violations, eliminating the reasons for poverty and poor economic development, depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation, minimizing the consequences of technological catastrophes, all these and other long-term priorities cannot fail to remain at the centre of United Nations activities in order to resolve humanitarian problems in our world.

Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe): I wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report before us on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/48/536) prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/168. As natural disasters and other emergencies calling for international humanitarian assistance have increased dramatically since the adoption of these resolutions, it is indeed timely that we should take stock of the response of the United Nations system to these crises.

We from the southern African region take a particular interest in the question of humanitarian emergency assistance for a number of specific reasons. First, our region has until recently suffered years of destabilization and war which have resulted in massive dislocations of sections of the population and large refugee flows. Secondly, this already grave situation was exacerbated by the devastating drought which struck the entire region in 1991 and 1992, a calamity which exacted a heavy toll on the economic structures and social fabric of the people of the region. Thirdly, this natural disaster of unprecedented proportions came at a time when most of the countries in the region had just embarked on stabilization and structural adjustment programmes aimed, *inter alia*, at improving the standards of living of our people through improved economic performance.

There can be no doubt that the drought in southern Africa was a particularly daunting challenge not only to the people of the region but also to the international community as a whole. Good national and regional planning, including the transport and communications infrastructure and a sound early warning system, as well as a well-coordinated international response all played a crucial role in averting what could well have turned into a famine in the entire region. Indeed, to the first ever famine relief appeal issued jointly by the United Nations and a regional body, the United Nations-Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Appeal for the Drought Emergency in Southern Africa, launched in June last year, the international community responded most generously. We are also cognizant and appreciative of the effective country-level coordination of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the cooperation among the operational agencies of the United Nations system in managing this crisis. We wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation to the international community, the various bodies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their prompt and selfless response to an emergency situation unknown in living memory.

While we are most thankful for the quick response of the international community to the situation in our region, we remain concerned that a substantial portion of the pledges made in response to the joint appeal of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and

the United Nations have not been converted into actual contributions. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, the total food and non-food requirements for the region as at 24 September 1993 amount to close to $951 million. There have been contributions of $724 million, leaving a substantial shortfall of close to $227 million. We would, in this connection, appeal to the donor community to honour its pledges in a timely manner, particularly bearing in mind the fact that the ravages of the drought are still with us and are being felt throughout the region.

In a similar vein, we wish to highlight a problem which characterized the southern African drought emergency operation, but which has also been pervasive in other regions: that of striking a correct balance between food and non-food requirements. The Secretary-General pointed out this problem in his report to the Assembly last year, and concerns have continued to be voiced in this regard ever since. Indeed, the report before us indicates that

> "the general pattern of under-funding of non-food aid requirements continues to pose serious problems for the coherent implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes". *(A/48/536, para. 52)*

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, also stressed this issue in his introductory statement on a related cluster of items before the Second Committee last Tuesday. We call on the donor community and the relevant international organizations to address this problem in a serious manner.

The General Assembly's adoption of resolution 46/182 was without doubt an important milestone in our quest to improve the response of the United Nations system and the wider international community to natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. That action by the Assembly demonstrated the desire of Member States for greater coherence and timeliness in the response of the United Nations system to humanitarian emergencies. My delegation is gratified to note that, under the new coordination arrangements mandated by resolution 46/182, the United Nations has considerably improved its capacity to formulate and coordinate its system-wide response to these emergencies.

Zimbabwe welcomes the lead role that the Department for Humanitarian Affairs has taken, in consultation with the Governments of the affected countries and the operational agencies concerned, in assessing the requirements in emergency situations with a view to developing an appropriate response by the international community. Indeed, it can only be on the basis of such in-depth assessments, involving all the concerned players, that realistic, consolidated inter-agency appeals can be launched. It is a source of great concern, however, that, as the report of the Secretary-General points out,

> "While the international community has been generous in its response, ... only 56 per cent of the requirements of the appeals launched to date have been met". *(A/48/536, para. 51)*

In this regard, we are heartened to note that the Department's Inter-Agency Standing Committee is reviewing the funding situation and looking into the various funding mechanisms with a view to improving resource-mobilization strategies for humanitarian assistance programmes.

On a related matter, it is encouraging to note that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund established in accordance with resolution 46/182 has been functioning in a satisfactory manner. Concerns, however, have been expressed over the constraints experienced in the utilization of the Fund, and a number of measures aimed at ensuring its most efficient functioning were recommended by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session last July.

Most important, it is our hope that the General Assembly will consider positively the proposal to increase the size of the Fund and, where appropriate, to expand its scope to include other international organizations. We have also noted with concern from the Secretary-General's report that field-coordination arrangements for emergency responses are under-funded. As we consider field-level coordination to be of fundamental importance, we would be in favour of the proposal for the utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to support field-level coordination arrangements.

Zimbabwe attaches importance to the imperative need for a continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. We would fully agree with the Secretary-General's conclusion that

> "By stressing this link between emergency operations and the development process, the Assembly has placed humanitarian assistance firmly in a developmental context". *(A/48/536, para. 108)*

In that regard, we wish to note with appreciation the continued collaboration between the Department for Humanitarian Affairs and the Southern African Development Community, with the aim of strengthening the capacities of Community member States in disaster prevention and preparedness. Seven special workshops under the Disaster Management Training Programme have

taken place for the drought-stricken countries of southern Africa. We have taken note of the additional financial requirements of that Programme, and would call on the donor community to respond positively to them.

Our appreciation also goes to other bodies of the United Nations system, notably the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, for the activities they are undertaking in our region in addressing the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. We also wish to thank the World Bank for the specific measures it is undertaking to lessen the adverse effects of the drought in the light of our structural-adjustment programmes.

Zimbabwe would wish to stress that for the requirements of the continuum from relief to rehabilitation to be fully met there is a need for adequate and predictable funding. We agree with the Secretary-General that

> "Appropriate and timely financing of the continuum from relief to development is cost-effective and would prevent the affected countries from sliding back into the vicious circle of dependency on relief assistance". *(A/48/536, para. 135)*

We therefore support his proposal that the donor community consider in a positive manner earmarking resources for rehabilitation and development, possibly through the creation of special funds.

I wish to conclude by referring to the heart-rending humanitarian emergency situations in Africa, which continue to call for urgent international attention. In our own part of the continent, we remain deeply concerned about the human tragedy that is unfolding in Angola. We once again call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Angola in order to make way for the provision of adequate humanitarian assistance and for a return of peace and normalcy to that unhappy country.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: Let me remind members that our meetings are scheduled to begin punctually at 10 in the morning and at 3 in the afternoon. But at those times the General Assembly Hall is usually deserted. The Assembly should not be seen to be ambiguous in its intentions, on the one hand calling for economy while on the other hand delaying its proceedings. Late starts, especially on a day like today when we have so many speakers, result either in overtime conference services or in the postponement of the debate, both of which involve financial costs.

I make an urgent appeal to the Assembly to show a greater respect for punctuality.

AGENDA ITEM 44 (*continued*)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/536)

Mrs. FRÉCHETTE (Canada) *(interpretation from French)*: This has been a trying year for all those involved in this very difficult humanitarian emergency enterprise undertaken for entire populations who found themselves at the extreme point of life, death, despair and chaos. It has been trying also, and especially, for the tens of millions of victims of brutal conflicts and devastating catastrophes that result in displacement and starvation for many people: for them, emergency assistance constitutes the last defence and the only glimmer of hope for a new and better life.

In this context, to speak of an indispensable mission for the United Nations appears to be a commonplace, a colourless epithet, since we are dealing every day with glaring crises which appeal to the very conscience of the entire international community. It is not surprising that this problem of humanitarian assistance is located at the very heart of the primary vocation of the United Nations system, for which solidarity, dignity, respect for basic rights, development and peace have long been the point of convergence of its own aspirations with the ideals that form the foundations of civilization.

There is no need to insist on the cardinal importance of this mission. The figures speak for themselves: 108 catastrophes and natural disasters, 26 complex emergencies during the past year. Behind these modest words are hidden $62 billion in damages, a dramatic reduction in the prospects for development and, above all, the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives. I would like on behalf of the Government of Canada to express my full sympathy and my appreciation for those who, in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and in the agencies, at Headquarters and in the field, have as their mission to try to provide relief and to prevent the worst. In this effort, they too are entitled to our encouragement and to our committed support. I would like to convey to Mr. Eliasson to what degree his zeal for the cause, his involvement and his conviction are sources of inspiration for us all.

For our part, we are trying to match our words with action, having agreed last year to budgets for the Department, as well as for the agencies and the other bodies dedicated to dealing with emergencies, of

$313 million for humanitarian assistance, of which $195 million is for food aid in the framework of 29 emergencies and of eight natural disasters.

The amount of energy and of attention devoted by the Member States to the issue of humanitarian aid is no doubt directly proportional to the exceptional importance accorded to it. The often critical comments directed at this new Department also can be understood as indications of the need to do more and better. However, these discussions have never called into question the essential obligation of coordination within the system and, consequently, have never called into question the central role of the Department. At best, we are dealing here only with questions of adjustments, of improvements, and methods.

While advocating these improvements, Canada nevertheless believes that the system has, more often than is said, lived up to its role. Everyone knows that crises that are avoided do not make headlines. The crisis in southern Africa represented a good example of inter-agency cooperation. Beyond the immediate reality, the true outlines of humanitarian action begin to take shape clearly in all its dimensions: that of prevention, that of humanitarian diplomacy, and, certainly, that of emergency aid of an immediately operational nature. It is precisely the dimension of prevention that permitted us to avoid a disastrous famine in southern Africa. This was achieved with the help of a little rain and of much cooperation and vision on the part of the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund in the field and of the Governments concerned. As far as humanitarian diplomacy is concerned, it was particularly evident in Angola, where perseverance on the issue of access finally made it possible to reach populations in dramatic situations of need. A dozen localities which had previously been cut off from all contact are now accessible. The same effort of negotiation has prevailed in the Sudan, permitting entire regions to benefit from initial aid there also. Finally, the operational dimension of the coordination undertaken by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs no longer has to be emphasized, so evident is the need for it. Even Somalia, with the noteworthy exception of South Mogadishu, can claim, beyond the end of the famine, the prospects of a beginning of rehabilitation.

We fully recognize the progress that has been made and we wish to underline that progress. The evaluation of the performance and of the very existence of the Department since its establishment was, moreover, largely carried out last summer by the Economic and Social Council. On that occasion the Council, in fulfilment of its role of evaluating and orienting policies, reiterated the validity of resolution 46/182 as the basic framework of operation; recalled the importance of the guiding principles contained in the resolution, particularly those relating to impartiality, to neutrality and to humaneness; insisted that the Department should become the advocate of a humanitarian dimension which should be fully taken into account in each of the United Nations operations; expressed satisfaction with the array of instruments at the disposal of the Department, while at the same time suggesting a series of measures to improve its efficiency; and finally requested that humanitarian aid should be placed in a context of development in order to break the circle of dependence and to prevent its recurrence.

Canada is fully satisfied with these conclusions and believes that the resolution should draw on them closely and be built on that basis.

(spoke in English)

Central to the management of humanitarian emergencies is the imperative need for coordination and for clear leadership by the Coordinator of Emergencies in assuming this task. This culture of cooperation, whose cause we pleaded at the time of the establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, at the Economic and Social Council and before the administrative bodies of the agencies, is slowly beginning to enter into the institutional habits of the system. The Department can bring real value added to the system by providing leadership and impetus and by offering an effective framework for implementation leading to rehabilitation and development. We believe that these functions are translated concretely, at the functional level, into the utilization of the instruments made available.

In the first place, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which must embody this culture of cooperation, should be oriented towards action and be responsible for the elaboration of policies on the issues facing it. Displaced populations, demining, demobilization, security of personnel, prevention and rehabilitation are at the very heart of all humanitarian action that claims to have vision and perspective. In this regard we expect that the Committee, under the guidance and the impetus of Mr. Eliasson, will be active and creative on these fronts.

The consolidated appeals should, as we have stated many times before, be closely based on the needs identified in the field. They should, in a global and realistic framework, identify clear priorities. They should be confined to complex emergencies and, finally, take into account the future needs of rehabilitation and of development. We believe that these appeals have already proven their usefulness for donor governments and for the

recipient countries, both of which benefit from a global and truly integrated approach.

As for the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, we are pleased to see that it is being used increasingly. More than $50 million has been utilized thus far, a clear sign of its usefulness. We continue to hope that simplified and clear rules will further facilitate its utilization. Canada is fully conscious of the fact that, as agencies become more familiar with this instrument, more demands will be placed on the Fund, as indicated by the report. Its extension to the International Organization for Migration would also translate into additional demands upon it. By definition, a revolving fund must be reimbursed. The solution to the problem of increased use lies in the shortening of the average seven-month period for reimbursing the Fund. The responsibility for reaching this goal is clearly shared among all the players. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs must exercise all necessary vigilance; agencies must quickly meet their obligation to reimburse the Fund; and donors must respond quickly to appeals. Canada is ready to shoulder its share of the responsibility and invites other contributing States to cooperate, in keeping with the objectives which led to the establishment of the Fund.

(spoke in French)

If the preceding considerations were truly understood and accepted by all those concerned, beginning with the agencies involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the basic conditions would be met for efficient and coordinated United Nations action in the humanitarian field. Certain substantive problems still remain to be solved. The budgetary problem continues to give us concern. We must make it clear that appropriate means should be approved to enable the Department to live up to the responsibilities entrusted to it.

We are encouraged by the evident signs of recognition by the Secretary-General himself of the high-priority nature of this issue. Once the debate in the Fifth Committee is over, it will be up to the Department to draw the lessons and impose on itself all the necessary strictness so that it can deal with present realities.

At a more immediate level, we feel called upon to respond to the problem of the need for capacity to react rapidly in the initial phase of an emergency, which is an undeniably critical time. The problem, we believe, is universally recognized, particularly in situations where the capacity for intervention in the field is insufficient or minimal.

Canada believes that it would be desirable and preferable for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to settle this question. That is its role, its vocation and its obligation. Precise deadlines would, however, appear to be necessary. The global review that the Economic and Social Council is to undertake in 1994 appears to constitute a natural point at which to make a more definitive judgement. More draconian solutions will have to be found at that point if the results are not acceptable.

In conclusion, Canada welcomes the outstanding spirit of dialogue that has prevailed between us on this so fundamental concern, humanitarian assistance. This augurs well, we believe, for the no less important discussions awaiting us on other issues relating to what amounts to a redefinition of the central mission of the United Nations system and to the ever-present need for a well-understood system of close coordination.

Ms. MARSHALL (Barbados): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are members of the United Nations - namely, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, the Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country Barbados - on agenda item 44, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations".

The countries of the Caribbean Community have taken careful note of the Secretary General's report (A/48/536) and the detailed and frank evaluation it has given of the progress made in carrying out the mandates of resolutions 46/182 and 47/168. We commend the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Eliasson, for its continued efforts to enhance system-wide cooperation and coordination of humanitarian assistance in response to the growing number of disasters and complex emergencies facing the international community.

We recognize the difficult and frequently dangerous circumstances under which the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its operational partners work, and the increasing responsibilities they face. It is therefore imperative, in our view, that the Department be staffed and funded in a manner commensurate with the vital role it has been called upon to play on the international community's behalf.

The CARICOM member States note in particular the evolution and functioning of the mechanisms set up under resolution 46/182. With regard to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, we endorse the calls made by the Secretary-General and by the Economic and Social Council

for an early review of the Fund's financial regulations to allow for greater flexibility in its utilization, for a more rapid disbursement of funds in the early stages of an emergency, and for consideration to be given to increasing the size of the Fund and expanding its scope to include other international organizations.

We agree also that there is a need to strengthen the consolidated inter-agency appeals process, and that such appeals should constitute a key component of a comprehensive strategy that meets immediate humanitarian needs, is compatible with longer-term rehabilitation and development, and addresses root causes.

The CARICOM Governments also support the conclusion of the Economic and Social Council that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should be more action-oriented in carrying out its mandate as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of policy issues related to humanitarian assistance and for formulating a coherent and timely United Nations response to major and complex emergencies.

We are heartened by the emphasis being placed by the Standing Committee on the continuum to rehabilitation and development, and look forward to receiving practical recommendations from the task force it has set up between the development organizations of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions to consider this important issue.

The CARICOM countries know from their own experience the vital need for humanitarian assistance policies to include comprehensive measures to ensure the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development. In this context, we fully endorse the guidelines detailed in paragraph 133 of the report.

The Secretary-General's report has drawn attention to the dramatic increase in the number and scope of complex emergency situations, and has pointed to the fact that it is war and civil strife that now frequently generate the need for humanitarian assistance. The overwhelming size and diversity of these crises continue to strain the international community's capacity to respond and provide a constant challenge to the peacemaking and humanitarian arms of the Organization. They continue to be a source of deep concern to our region.

For the peaceful democracies of the Caribbean Community, the most immediate and compelling symbol of humanitarian suffering is the tragic situation of the people of Haiti, whose illegitimate rulers continue to flout the will of the international community. Some of our members, immediate neighbours of this unhappy country, have experienced first-hand the desperate exodus the situation has engendered. We note with regret that the response to date to the consolidated appeal for Haiti covers only 6.3 per cent of assessed needs.

The last two years have also seen a dramatic increase in the effects of natural disasters, which, according to estimates of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, inflicted damage totalling $44 billion in 1991 and $62 billion in 1992. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, droughts, floods, earthquakes, and cyclones are just as destructive for communities and settlements as wars and civil confrontation. They too merit a prompt and thorough response from the United Nations system.

We in the Caribbean are no strangers to the destructive powers of nature. In fact, in a recent survey by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, six CARICOM member States were ranked among the 25 most disaster-prone countries, 13 of which were small island developing States. Such natural disasters, primarily in the form of hurricanes but increasingly including storm surges and floods, are occurring with growing frequency and intensity in our region, with pervasive and long-term effects on our economies.

A single natural catastrophe can result in a fall in gross domestic product of as much as 30 per cent in a single year, and impact disproportionately on efforts at rehabilitation.

A recent phenomenon that has added to the burden on our countries has been the huge rise in insurance premiums on property and the withdrawal by large international insurance companies of reinsurance facilities for the islands of our subregion, now classified as high-risk entities. The economic consequences are so severe that the matter has received consideration by the Conference of the CARICOM Heads of Government, which has created an interdisciplinary working group to conduct an urgent review of the situation.

The extreme vulnerability of small island developing States, including the islands of the Caribbean, to the effects of natural disasters was recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Chapter 17 G of Agenda 21. As a consequence, the question of natural and environmental disasters is likely to be one of the priority areas in an eventual programme of action being prepared for consideration by the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Barbados in April next year.

In this regard, specific actions are being recommended at the national, regional and international levels to assist the disaster-prone small islands in preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. It is anticipated that the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator will play an important role in support of the programme once it is approved.

One of the programme's important objectives at the international level is to assist small island developing States in establishing national and regional institutional mechanisms and policies to reduce the impacts of natural disasters, improve disaster preparedness and integrate natural-disaster considerations in development planning, including through access to resources for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The draft programme also recommends that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction give special recognition to small island developing States so that their unique characteristics will be taken into account in developing natural disaster reduction management programmes.

Other actions under consideration by CARICOM States at the national and regional levels, in the context of the draft programme of action, include the establishment or strengthening of integrated disaster management agencies; the strengthening of early-warning systems and access to telecommunication links; the implementation of building codes, hazard mapping and risk analysis; the promotion of awareness and preparedness at the community level; the establishment of national disaster emergency funds; human resource development in disaster preparedness, mitigation and response; and the sharing of expertise and experiences among small island developing States.

It is the firm belief of CARICOM States that our demonstrated vulnerability to natural disasters necessitates a systematic upgrading of our own national and subregional capacity for disaster management in all its aspects. To this end, we have worked closely over the years with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and its predecessor, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, particularly through the now-concluded Pan Caribbean Disaster Prevention Project. There remains, however, an urgent and ongoing need to strengthen national and regional institutional capabilities to respond adequately in times of crisis. In this regard, while we appreciate the continued support of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs for our regional efforts, we believe that those efforts would be enhanced by a strengthened presence of the Department in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), established in 1991 by the Caribbean Community, is a tangible example of our subregion's determination to develop an indigenous capacity for disaster management and response. At the same time, we look forward to international support in those areas, such as search and rescue, where our capabilities remain inadequate. We are pleased to record that CDERA has developed four areas of concentration in its 1993-96 Work Programme, for which it is hoped there will be substantial inter-agency support. These include the consolidation of a regional disaster response mechanism; the enhancement of both the human resource capacity and local institutional arrangements for managing disasters; the updating of information and communications infrastructure; and the implementation of risk assessment and vulnerability mapping in the development of disaster mitigation and preventive strategies.

The CARICOM member States wish to recognize the contributions of a number of United Nations and regional operational agencies, as well as bilateral donors, in the development of a disaster management infrastructure in our subregion. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme, the Pan American Health Organization, Habitat, the World Meteorological Organization and the Organization of American States are making useful contributions in the areas of disaster management training, preparedness and response, as are the Canadian International Development Agency, the British Development Division, the Overseas Development Administration, the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Volunteers Technical Assistance. We look forward to a widening of support to encompass prevention and mitigation activities.

At present the CARICOM region is considering a comprehensive disaster emergency management programme, which, in addition to the traditional areas of preparedness and response, is seeking to broaden its scope to cover all aspects of disaster management and to link this to sustainable development. We would like to see an approach accommodated within the existing structures of humanitarian assistance, where, for every major disaster event, there is a facility through which a proportion of that assistance is allocated towards addressing a potential source of loss. We feel that only such substantive indicative commitments can propel the diverse interests in a commonly desired direction.

With regard to the review of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, to take place next year, we urge that care be taken to ensure that the new technologies promoted in this context do not eliminate traditional disaster-resilient mechanisms, which exist in many

developing countries. A fusion of wisdoms must be the focus of our efforts.

The Caribbean region has had more than a decade of experience in promoting institutionalized disaster programmes. We believe that our experiences could be of interest and value to other countries in the developing world and, likewise, that we could learn valuable lessons from the experiences of others. In this regard, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be encouraged to facilitate programmes that promote the sharing of expertise and experience among disaster-prone countries in different regions of the world.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): It is a sad reality that the global need for humanitarian emergency assistance is more urgent today than it has ever been.

During 1993 the number of people affected by new and ongoing emergencies was more than 58.6 million. That figure includes 18 million people who faced the threat of starvation in southern Africa during 1992 and in early 1993.

The origins of the emergencies are often complex, but let us be clear about a central fact - it is war and civil strife that are leading to increasing calls for humanitarian assistance, calls which the Secretary-General acknowledges in his report as bringing

> "new challenges, and dangers, for the United Nations system in implementing its humanitarian role in conflict situations." *(A/48/536, para. 3)*

The fact that 58.6 million people were affected by emergencies during 1993 demonstrates the sheer enormity of the task we face. A staggering number of lives have been affected by the breakup of States, by the growth in regional and ethnic conflicts since the end of the cold-war era, and by the threat of famine of massive proportions.

In the two years since we adopted resolution 46/182 our capacity to deal promptly and effectively with large and complex emergencies has been severely stretched. The world has had to deal with no fewer than 26 major emergencies in addition to 108 natural disasters. As already noted, the causes of emergencies are often complex, and, consequently, the essential ingredients for a solution are often difficult to define. But if something is right, it must be attempted, even if it is difficult. And it is right that the United Nations should take up the challenge of today's humanitarian emergencies and do so with all of its intellect, spirit and drive - all that it can muster.

We may not be able to eliminate or wind down quickly enough the suffering involved, but if we can reduce it step by step we will have helped, and we will have done the least we should do.

There have been some successes. The prevention of a massive famine in 10 States of southern Africa during 1992 and in early 1993 ranks as a fine achievement which saved the lives of some 18 million people. That exercise was a tribute to the speed, skill and sheer hard work of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and the major executing agency - the World Food Programme - and non-governmental organizations. It demonstrated that, when there is the political will to place humanitarianism first, much can be achieved. But the reverse is true: if political will is absent, the job of humanitarian relief becomes extremely difficult.

The report of the Secretary-General, in particular its conclusions and recommendations, demonstrates the magnitude of the humanitarian assistance challenge and its complexity. The conclusions of this year's high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council showed that the international community is resolved to meet this challenge and to strengthen relevant coordination mechanisms.

If we are to tackle the complex humanitarian emergencies we face today and know we will face in the future, we will need new techniques, new systems, new tools. In particular, we need to work together to find more effective ways to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance. Our first challenge is to face two very basic problems: the need to get our priorities right in placing the humanitarian objective first, and the need to be able to establish systems able to cope with humanitarian crises of the proportion and complexity we face today.

In Somalia, we recognized - possibly too late - the overwhelming need to ensure that sufficient supplies of food got through to the civilian population in the midst of the worst kind of civil breakdown. Yet in recognizing the need for force to underpin that humanitarian objective we began to lose our direction. Our objectives became so blurred as to call seriously into question the role of the United Nations. The humanitarian objective was almost compromised, and with it the most precious asset of the United Nations - its credibility.

The critical support given by military intervention in bringing the population of Somalia back from catastrophe is widely recognized. It is not possible in our time to contemplate an effective response to those humanitarian emergencies which are born of political and civil disorder

without recognizing the close, integral role of diplomacy, and even the use of force. There is a dynamic interrelationship between the humanitarian, political and military aspects of a complex emergency. But we need to learn from our experience in Somalia to ensure that the fundamental principles laid out in resolution 46/182 - the principles of humanity, of neutrality, of impartiality - are always maintained. The humanitarian objective must remain paramount.

Secondly, we need to find a much more effective way of meeting our humanitarian goals in large and complex emergencies than we have at present, and we need to do so with a heightened sense of urgency. Our capacity to respond quickly and effectively has enormous implications for human life, not just in the short term but for the very prevention of conflict and for the prompt alleviation of tensions. There is a need to realize that unsolved humanitarian problems affect political stability and potentially manifest themselves later as far worse humanitarian problems. Preventive diplomacy has a key role to play in humanitarian affairs. It is also time for us to recognize that the responsibility for effective humanitarian responses involves a four-way partnership between the United Nations, the donors, the non-governmental organizations and, most important of all, the recipient country. Unless each one of these collaborates effectively, the prospects for an effective response are sharply reduced.

Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, in his address to the General Assembly on 27 September, in which he presented his study *Cooperating for Peace*, proposed a new approach to meeting the humanitarian assistance challenge. Senator Evans noted that, despite recent efforts to strengthen humanitarian relief coordination, there are widely acknowledged inadequacies in the present United Nations international system and that structural reasons lie at the heart of those problems. In the first place, the post-Second-World-War United Nations relief system evolved from a structure created for different purposes. Apart from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), all the main agencies now involved in emergencies acquired their role as a secondary function, the main role being seen as the promotion of economic and social development. Notwithstanding the dramatic upsurge in their humanitarian relief work in the 1980s, the organization of the agencies underwent no fundamental change.

It is not clear that either the recently established Department of Humanitarian Affairs or the Inter-Agency Standing Committee is going to be capable of resolving the coordination problems that flow from this multiple-agency, multiple-function structure. Given that the problem is largely structural in origin, it seems to cry out for a structural solution. A number of models have been suggested, but our own preference is for the creation of a single United Nations disaster-response agency under the aegis of the Secretary-General, working to a new deputy secretary-general for humanitarian affairs. This would be an operational body, taking over the relief and related basic rehabilitation work of the current major players - the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme (WFP). To the extent that the skills of other agencies were required, they would be provided under contract or on a fee-for-service basis. The necessary skills could also be purchased elsewhere from non-governmental organizations and from national Governments. All this would leave UNICEF and WFP continuing with their development work, and UNHCR concentrating on its protection work. While this model does involve major change - and such change in the United Nations system is, of course, always somewhat controversial - we believe it should be, it must be, seriously considered.

Senator Evans also proposed in *Cooperating for Peace* elevating the coordination of humanitarian affairs within the United Nations Secretariat to Deputy-Secretary-General level. A person appointed at that level would be able to maximize the United Nations capacity to direct, to rationalize and to coordinate humanitarian responses and thus avoid the often unproductive competition that has occurred both within the United Nations system and outside it on coordination issues. It would also reflect the high importance attached to coordination in this area of the United Nations activities.

Our objective is to achieve a much better response to emergencies than we have at present and we are willing to consider all possible options that might lead to this outcome - the outcome we need. But, meanwhile, time will not stand still. We cannot afford to leave the present arrangements as they are. We must be willing to engage actively in looking for improvements in the status quo, even if we think this is a second-best approach.

In that spirit, let me comment briefly on a few specific proposals referred to in the Secretary-General's report. First, we agree with extending coverage of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to include the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Secondly, we think that ways of speeding up the reimbursement of the CERF should be examined in preference to seeking a large increase in its size. Its

revolving nature should enable the Fund to extend its reach, if the slow pace of reimbursement can be improved.

Thirdly, we remain unconvinced, on the evidence presented so far, that the answer to improved coordination is to establish additional funding for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to enhance initial coordination in complex emergencies. However, we remain interested in seeing a full and detailed proposal on what is entailed. But in the absence of a draft proposal, our best judgement at present is that this amount of field-level coordination risks making the Department operational in large and complex emergencies, a course which my Government does not favour.

We commend the dedication of Under-Secretary-General Eliasson, of his staff and of the United Nations agencies and other relevant international bodies for their sterling work in responding to the humanitarian assistance challenge. We recognize the improvements which have been made in the workings of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its Working Group. We believe the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is doing an important job, and doing it well, in so far as it can, and we feel strongly that the Department should be properly equipped to manage better its affairs between New York and Geneva. But we believe that in time the structure of the present arrangements will be shown to be clearly insufficient. We believe, therefore, that entirely new arrangements will need to be established.

We also congratulate Mrs. Ogata on her re-election as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We strongly support the comprehensive approach the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has taken towards the crises in the former Yugoslavia and Cambodia. But, as we have already said, no single agency is yet capable of dealing by itself with the full spectrum of global disaster-response, humanitarian and refugee crises involving massive displacements of people.

The world demands a more effective and timely response to the natural and man-made tragedies which afflict vast numbers of our peoples. We must close the gaps and eliminate the overlaps in mandates which make for duplication in some responses and failure to act in others. Clearer, focused lines of authority are needed. As an interim measure, we remain committed to working with others to try to improve the existing arrangements. But we believe an effective answer will elude us until we take the radical course and resolve the mismatch between current circumstances and past structures.

Above all, we need to demonstrate with renewed conviction that the humanitarian objective is so fundamentally important that we will not compromise on it.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): In preparation for our consideration of agenda item 44, Under-Secretary-General Eliasson recently briefed representatives of Member States on the activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs during the past two years. He concluded - and I agree with him - that resolution 46/182 has been reasonably effective and that the international community has clearly benefited from it. For example, as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has noted, except for the southern part of Mogadishu, most of Somalia has now become secure, and its people have been fed fairly well through humanitarian relief activities. Also cited as examples of successful humanitarian efforts of the United Nations are the early response to the drought in southern Africa and the operation in Mozambique.

Regrettably, the mass media generally do not focus on these success stories, and so they are apt to be soon forgotten. Whereas the United Nations once suffered what was called a crisis of public indifference, now, with the end of the cold war, it is said to be confronted with a crisis of excessive expectations, and, as a result, it has become more vulnerable to criticism. All in all, however, I firmly believe that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has established a solid foundation in the United Nations system to meet the challenges ahead.

With resolution 46/182, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was given the difficult mandate of strengthening coordination among all United Nations humanitarian assistance activities. The lack of an effective organization and sufficient resources makes this a particularly difficult task. My Government is pleased to note, therefore, that the budget proposal prepared for the biennium 1994-95 gives priority to the field of humanitarian activities, together with peace-keeping operations and human rights. It reaffirms its resolve to cooperate with other interested Member States for the realization of this budget plan.

On this occasion I should like to announce that the Government of Japan has decided to promote, together with the United States Government, efforts to help strengthen the Department's communication network capacity, which is so urgently needed.

At the coordination segment of the meetings of the Economic and Social Council last summer, my delegation underlined the need for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to act as a catalyst or facilitator among the

operational agencies and thereby generate added value for the United Nations humanitarian activities now under way. I identified five areas of endeavour where the Department might do so in the process of coordinating humanitarian assistance. They are, first, a clear identification of what constitutes a complex emergency and a redefinition of the Department's role in ensuring a prompt and effective response to complex emergencies; second, the conduct of humanitarian diplomacy; third, the function of humanitarian advocacy in combined United Nations operations involving peace-keeping, peacemaking and humanitarian assistance; fourth, the launching of consolidated appeals; and, fifth, the orchestrating of humanitarian efforts covering the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development. It is gratifying to learn from the Secretary-General's report (A/48/536) that the Department has undertaken wide-ranging efforts towards this end and that it has in fact made progress in several areas.

I should like to take this opportunity to comment on a number of issues which pose new challenges for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

One task given to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs which was not envisaged in resolution 46/182 is the coordination of its activities with those of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs in responding to complex emergencies. My Government notes with satisfaction that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been serving as the humanitarian spokesman on behalf of the other operational organizations, in compliance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, as laid down in the resolution. It is also encouraging to note that valuable experience has been gained regarding relations between humanitarian and military operations in field-level operations, and that further improvements will be introduced to ensure coordination and the effective division of work.

Moreover, I agree with the view conveyed in the Secretary-General's report that:

> "Basic relief assistance can help to defuse political tension, thereby contributing to the promotion of a peaceful solution to a conflict." (*A/48/536, para. 143*)

Our experience has borne out this relationship. In this connection, my Government welcomes the forthcoming meeting on the coordination of aid for Somalia, at which members of the various Somali clans will participate in the discussion of future relief and rehabilitation programmes. We anticipate that this effort will facilitate progress towards a political solution of the situation in Somalia.

Although I have noted the political usefulness of humanitarian assistance, we must recognize that such assistance in and of itself can neither provide nor substitute for a political solution to conflicts. We must therefore concentrate our efforts on removing the root causes of conflicts, irrespective of whether humanitarian assistance efforts are under way. Moreover, humanitarian operations should not be burdened with unreasonable expectations when a political breakthrough is deemed remote or virtually impossible.

When the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182 two years ago, few could have anticipated the number, magnitude and complexity of the humanitarian crises now facing the United Nations. To meet increasing demands for humanitarian relief across the world, the United Nations has launched numerous consolidated appeals for contributions, totalling $4.6 billion. According to the Secretary-General's report, however, only 56 per cent of that goal has been met to date. This shortfall could undermine the credibility of the United Nations system, which is a matter of great concern to members of the international community. From a donor's viewpoint, I must say that to a certain extent, at least, the difficulty may derive from the fact that some of those appeals are poorly formulated in terms of needs assessment and prioritization, and also from the lack of adequate follow-up. I am therefore gratified that the Secretary-General's report acknowledges that there is room for improvement in permitting a more focused donor response and assures us that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will undertake follow-up activities to achieve this end.

From a wider perspective, however, I believe there may have to be a new strategy and a new conception to ensure the availability of resources to allow for a more rapid and effective response to emergencies. This conviction is strengthened whenever a United Nations resolution is passed calling for a tripartite United Nations operation combining peace-keeping, peacemaking and humanitarian activities to respond to a complex emergency. Even though these three operations go hand in hand in addressing a combination of objectives - maintaining order, assisting in national reconciliation and contributing to economic rehabilitation - the disparity that exists with regard to financial arrangements remains a matter of concern. While peace-keeping and peacemaking efforts have resource bases on which to rely, humanitarian operations are obliged to secure funding on a case-by-case basis.

My Government is gratified to note that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is reviewing the funding situation and is studying different funding

mechanisms and resource mobilization strategies for humanitarian assistance programmes. We are eager to hear the outcome of its deliberations on this urgent issue.

In this connection, my Government would like to underscore the importance of pursuing preventive diplomacy, which is one of the central themes of "An Agenda for Peace". It is also looking forward to the forthcoming agenda for development, which will address the root causes from the socio-economic angle, in an effort to reverse the trend of ever-increasing burdens on the international community.

My Government is pleased that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) has come into force and is serving as an effective tool for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. My Government is well aware of the suggestion that there be more flexible utilization of the Fund, particularly to expedite responses in the field. It is generally sympathetic to this idea, and calls on the IASC to study it, while taking into account the revolving nature of the Fund and the need for accountability. As regards the issue of increasing the size of the Fund, my Government considers that before a decision to this effect is reached a review should be made of those financial arrangements and reserve funds which are already available for emergencies in related humanitarian operational agencies, and that complementarity between these arrangements and the Fund should be established.

Japan fully recognizes the need for rapid response in the field. Indeed, this is one of the areas where the coordination capacity of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should immediately be strengthened in order to help initiate relief operations, especially where there is no humanitarian infrastructure. This will require the dispatch of fact-finding missions, the assessment of needs and the preparation of consolidated appeals at the very onset of emergencies. Financial arrangements must therefore be urgently addressed. Several constructive ideas have been proposed. For example, it has been suggested that interest accrued by the Fund be used in such a manner as to preserve the revolving nature of the Fund, that the start-up costs of an operation be included in consolidated appeals and that a special reserve fund be established for such start-up operations. My Government attaches particular importance to ensuring funding for prompt start-up operations in the field and hopes that the IASC will undertake further deliberations on this issue as well.

In closing, let me reaffirm my Government's support for the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in enhancing coordination of humanitarian assistance in the United Nations system. My Government will continue to extend its full cooperation to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as it discharges its important responsibilities.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. AFONSO (Mozambique): It is a great honour and privilege for me to participate on behalf of my delegation in the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/536) on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

My delegation would like to place on record its deep appreciation of the Secretary-General's report for the lucid manner in which it illustrates the various activities carried out by the Organization in its quest to meet the ever-increasing demands for humanitarian assistance in various parts of the world.

In our endeavours to face the challenges of humanitarian assistance and deal with emergency situations the role of the United Nations is of the utmost importance in providing a proper framework for effective coordination when the international community is called upon to address difficult problems emerging from natural disasters or other phenomena of a complex nature.

The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 was a wise and timely initiative, given the increasing number of emergency situations world wide that call for humanitarian assistance.

In this connection I wish once again to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose recent visit to Mozambique contributed greatly to generating a new momentum for rapid implementation of the peace process upon which rests the smooth implementation of the whole programme of rehabilitation of and humanitarian assistance to Mozambique.

As I speak here today I wish to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and to his staff for their untiring dedication to the day-to-day problems affecting millions of people in the world. Indeed, since assuming his duties as Head of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs Ambassador Eliasson has shown a great sense of leadership in dealing with sensitive issues affecting human beings in times of despair and distress. We in Mozambique are happy to note that the efforts of peacemaking and peace-building undertaken through the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) can go hand in hand with

humanitarian assistance programmes and developmental issues.

We in southern Africa, including Mozambique, attach great importance to the agenda item under consideration. As the Assembly will recall, until very recently the southern African region was suffering from the consequences of a severe drought, the worst of its kind in living memory. For that reason a consolidated appeal was launched by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to address the appalling situation facing the peoples of the region.

The consequences of the drought were particularly harsh in Mozambique, where the plight created by the prolonged drought had been exacerbated by a protracted war, resulting in dramatic human suffering that only began to come to an end last year with the signing in Rome of the General Peace Agreement. Therefore, we have been faced with a very complex burden that requires massive international attention to all its multifaceted dimensions.

At present, although we have been blessed with some modest rain since the last quarter of 1992, the whole picture of the humanitarian and emergency situation in Mozambique remains critical, as is well documented in the Consolidated Humanitarian Assistance Programme for 1993 and 1994. It is worth mentioning, however, that with the end of the war and prospects for peace in the country a Consolidated Humanitarian Assistance Programme prepared by the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in coordination with the Government, is under way. The Programme encompasses a broad range of immediate actions, including support for the repatriation process, the demobilization of armed units, emergency relief, the restoration of essential services, and balance-of-payment and budget support. Failure to address one of those components will naturally have a negative impact on the whole process, which aims at establishing a healthy environment for our people as we embark on the difficult task of rebuilding a nation torn by war and natural disasters for so many years.

As has been recognized time and again, the magnitude of the country's current needs goes far beyond our powers and ability to respond with the required resources, both human and material. However, my Government is deploying its best efforts to meet any requirements within its reach and is cooperating fully with the United Nations system and the international community as a whole in all aspects of tackling the problems of major concern.

The Donors' Conference on Mozambique held at Rome on 15 and 16 December 1992, under the auspices of the Government of Italy, and the Follow-up Meeting held at Maputo on 8 and 9 June of this year have allowed the participants to chart the programmes to be undertaken and to assess the resources needed for a successful humanitarian operation in Mozambique.

An updated assessment of the requirements for humanitarian assistance to Mozambique shows that the country needs some $609.7 million to meet its priority needs, of which $559.4 million have been committed by donors. We express our profound gratitude to the donor community for its continued assistance to our people, and we trust that the international community will continue to spare no efforts to address effectively the emergency situation in Mozambique, particularly with regard to securing the $50 million shortfall that remains.

We are pleased and encouraged to note that the Government, the United Nations system and the international community in general are in accord in outlining the course of action required to tackle the problem of emergency and humanitarian assistance to Mozambique.

The prospects of peace make a priority of concentration on reconciliation and on the return to normal life of the millions of returnees and displaced persons throughout the country. By and large, the successful reintegration of returnees and displaced persons will create conditions conducive to the involvement of every Mozambican citizen in the development programmes that are under way in the country. This framework will also contribute to acceleration of the Government's programme for economic and social recovery.

We also note with satisfaction that the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, as one of its innovative measures, attaches great importance to the continuum efforts by integrating humanitarian programmes into long-term rehabilitation and development strategies and that the existing inter-agency consultation mechanisms at the country level are being applied successfully in Mozambique.

I should like, on behalf of my Government, to take this opportunity to reiterate our pleasure at and our appreciation of the remarkable work that has been done by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHAC) to help the Government to address vital issues pertaining to the humanitarian relief programmes in our country.

As of now, about 30 per cent of Mozambique's 2 million refugees have come home under a wide programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees, in close collaboration with UNOHAC and other international organizations. About 1.5 million internally displaced persons have been resettled in the country, in the areas of their origin or of their choice, and it is expected that about 2 million people will be resettled within the next 12 months.

Other major concerns, in the overall process of emergency rehabilitation in the country, are the safety of United Nations and other international personnel, the demining process and the question of free access to remote areas.

With regard to mine clearance, which is essential to the resettlement of returnees and displaced persons, the Government is cooperating fully in the Mozambique mine-clearance programme, which was undertaken on the initiative of the United Nations. This is a comprehensive programme, which includes the clearance of priority roads, the development of a mine-clearance capability and the implementation of a mine-awareness programme. Its success is crucial to the current efforts to rehabilitate the rural infrastructure and to promote agricultural production. It was in this context that my Government supported and sponsored the resolution concerning assistance in mine clearance that was adopted recently by the Assembly.

In our view, the decision of the United Nations, by General Assembly resolution 44/236 of December 1989, to launch the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction represented the first step on the path of promoting concerted international action to mitigate the impact of natural disasters. Most developing countries want to see the substantive part of resolution 44/236 implemented before the end of this decade. The report that we are considering today sums up the objective of that part in these words:

> "It represents an international effort to promote awareness of the importance of disaster reduction, to support the strengthening of the capacities of vulnerable countries, to facilitate technology transfer and information exchange, and to promote research and training." *(A/48/536, para. 27)*

At this juncture we are particularly pleased at the steps that have been taken to convene a World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, to be held next year at Yokohama, Japan. We have high hopes of a successful outcome to this Conference as it will provide an opportunity for a mid-term review of activities related to the International Decade and will establish a programme and determine concrete action to be undertaken in the years to come.

But any programme for the reduction of natural disasters, if it is to be successful, will certainly have to include a package of mitigation and preventive measures rooted in programmes of sustained economic and social development encompassing a long-term strategy to promote national capacity-building, which will be an essential element of an effective response to future disasters and emergency situations.

We are of the view that the Secretary-General's 1994 report on the corresponding agenda item should, in so far as is possible, make an assessment of the experience of the United Nations in addressing the issue of the coordination of various humanitarian and emergency situations throughout the world. We believe that the lessons learned from these operations can be of paramount importance in the promotion of future preparedness in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. At the same time, we believe that, given the unpredictable nature of the natural and similar disasters that have stricken nations and regions from time to time, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be given much greater flexibility in utilization of the Revolving Fund. We believe that this would enhance the Department's capacity to react effectively and promptly to future emergency situations.

Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: The delegation of Tunisia would like, first, to thank the Secretary-General for the high quality of the documentation on agenda item 44.

The concerns expressed in the Secretary-General's report about the devastating effects of natural disasters and other emergency situations, as well as the loss of life that they cause and their negative impact on economic and social development, are all shared by my country.

As document A/48/536 points out, the number, magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and emergency situations requiring a coordinated response from the international community have been on the increase in recent years.

No region today is totally immune to natural disasters or man-made devastation. But, as the report states, too often these disasters have effects that are longer lasting since the people affected are more economically and socially vulnerable. Hence in recent decades the proliferation of disasters in disadvantaged and ecologically fragile areas has compounded the sometimes unavoidable degradation of the environment.

Poverty, demographic pressures and settlement in areas of risk are all factors that have compounded, and in

many cases have caused, ecological damage, destruction and imbalances between man and his natural environment.

I believe we need not emphasize the complexity of the natural disasters and other emergency situations of which our peoples and countries have been victims and which they have had to confront with very limited human and material resources. Hence the importance of a rapid response and the need for careful coordination in the field to limit damage, mitigate the consequences of disasters, and enable the people to resume as normal a life as possible and take control of the situation. At the same time, prompt coordination in the field makes it possible for the local and national authorities quickly and effectively to meet the needs and expectations of the victims of emergency situations.

In this enormous task the contribution made by the United Nations system, side by side with governmental authorities, is of capital importance. Clearly, our States have all, in one way or another, established structures to deal with the priorities in difficult situations. But in these complex situations the expertise, the experience and the technical know-how of the United Nations system are indispensable, given the magnitude of the disasters and the needs that arise from them and which are beyond the capabilities of these States.

In the field, experience in recent years has shown that effectiveness in responding to disasters and emergency situations depends on coordination and centralization that harmonizes efforts and avoids waste of resources and ad hoc or amateurish approaches. The coordination we have in mind should come about within the United Nations system, between the operational organizations and the specialized agencies under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and in close cooperation with the Government of the affected country.

Our action should also include disaster prevention and should strengthen the system established by the United Nations. Necessary steps should be taken to prevent man-made disasters, particularly those occurring as a result of armed conflicts or nuclear or chemical activities. Past experience should enable us to draw the proper conclusions in order to avoid such disasters in future.

Furthermore, we continue to take part in all activities relating to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and we hope that the international community will in this context draw on everyone's experience to adopt a better preventive approach.

The determination of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs "to meet existing and future challenges" (A/48/536, para. 15) is welcomed by my country. We express our support for the work of the Department and renew our appeal for the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to be given the necessary resources to consolidate its work, increase its effectiveness and enable it to respond speedily and effectively to disasters and other emergency situations.

That is why we appeal to the international community to bear in mind the long-term recovery and development needs of the affected country in order to strengthen national capacities and to mitigate the effects of disasters and prevent their recurrence. In this connection, I wish to quote from the Secretary-General's report:

> "Some disasters may be prevented, and the impact and adverse effects of others can be reduced." *(A/48/536, para. 20)*

My country fully shares that assessment.

We also wish to support the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report regarding mitigation of the effects of future disasters. We think, therefore, that mitigation measures should be built into development programmes and be an integral part of the continuum from disaster to rehabilitation.

Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic):* Colombia has already spoken on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and, therefore, also on our behalf, so I should merely like to add the following.

My delegation has studied with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (A/48/536). We wish to commend the report as it deals with all aspects of the problem. We agree with the Secretary-General's view that there is an increasing demand on humanitarian assistance and a paucity of resources.

Experience has shown that the provision of humanitarian assistance is a complex activity that requires a great deal of clarity, transparency and understanding at all levels. Accordingly, my delegation wishes to make the following comments:

First, past experience has shown that there is a paucity of resources despite the increasing number of requests. Hence the need to make savings in the disposable resources, by depending on the local capacity of the affected countries. This requires providing the national institutions responsible for humanitarian emergency assistance and disaster mitigation with equipment and competent local cadres. This should be coupled with the

rehabilitation of the means of transport and the organization of special units to carry out research and provide training in such areas as disaster mitigation and early warning.

In our view, the approach of depending on such institutions is the most appropriate one as the said institutions are the most viable. At the same time, local non-governmental organizations should be rehabilitated, as they are more in touch with the local environment in their own countries and have the advantage of speaking the language of the recipients of assistance. Here we should like to point out that expertise and knowledge can be acquired through experience.

Secondly, all parties concerned must respect the need for humanitarian assistance to be provided independently from political considerations: it must not be linked to or confused with such considerations in any way. Only independence and efficiency can ensure substantial, effective provision of humanitarian assistance and the continued viability of assistance programmes.

Thirdly, in its resolution 46/182, the General Assembly emphasized that the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development was one of the fundamental principles of multilateral assistance. At its 1993 summer session, the Economic and Social Council too called upon relief programmes, consolidated appeals and non-governmental organizations to take into account the needs of the affected countries with respect to long-term rehabilitation and development at an early stage of emergency assistance. The Economic and Social Council also called for the strengthening of national capabilities to mitigate the effects of future problems. The Council also recommended that bodies with a development mandate and involved in relief activities should strengthen their capacities and prepare rehabilitation programmes to build the necessary infrastructures, thus helping the countries and agencies involved in dealing with the financial side of the issue.

However, the response to the needs of development and reconstruction programmes remains rudimentary in many parts of the world while reconstruction and development must go hand in hand with emergency assistance so that emergency situations may not recur and national capabilities may be strengthened.

Fourthly, mines left in areas of past conflicts threaten civilian lives and hamper emergency assistance, reconstruction and the return of displaced populations. Demining requires vast resources and we request that the necessary resources be made available for that purpose. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should make demining a priority activity. In this respect, Sudan sponsored the draft resolution on demining which was adopted by the General Assembly earlier this session.

Fifthly, the optimum use of disposable resources must be made a priority. This could be achieved through expending those resources on the emergency assistance and reconstruction programmes they are allocated to while reducing administrative costs by depending on local staff. In the same vein, Governments, United Nations offices and non-governmental organizations on the ground should undertake the tasks of assessment missions mandated by the United Nations. This would reduce expenditures and permit proper assessments to be carried out.

Sixthly, the recently established Central Emergency Revolving Fund is a new way for the United Nations to take swift action in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. In our view, increased resources should be made available to the Fund in the light of the increased number of disasters and greater number of requests for United Nations assistance. We agree that the United Nations Migration Fund too should be included in this connection. It should be possible to use the Revolving Fund with greater flexibility, to enable the coordinating committee and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to send out assessment teams in the initial stages of a disaster.

Finally, we agree on this matter with the Secretary-General's view that:

> "Lessons drawn from the recent implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes have indicated the need to design programmes and strategies for the continuum which take into account the specific circumstances of each country, including socio-economic, political, historic and cultural considerations. In addition, the following guidelines should be noted:
>
> "(a) Relief assistance should not lead to long-term dependency on external aid;
>
> "(b) It is essential that international entities involved in the continuum work in close cooperation with the national authorities at all levels;
>
> "(c) Rehabilitation and reconstruction criteria should be integrated into the emergency response at the earliest possible stage;
>
> "(d) ... programmes ... should provide for the strengthening of early warning systems and of national capacity to respond to disasters;

"(e) Assistance programmes should be designed ... [so as to] provide the bridge from relief to reconstruction and development;

"(f) Specific resources should be earmarked for rehabilitation and reconstruction". *(A/48/536, para. 133)*

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) *(interpretation from French)*: I wish to begin by associating my delegation with the statement made this morning by the Chairman of the Group of 77.

Permit me next to pay a tribute to Mr. Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for the high quality of the report before the Assembly on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. We also convey our admiration for his selfless commitment in the fulfilment of his noble task - thanks to which countless members of the human race identify the United Nations with their very survival.

The Organization has indeed done a great deal to provide rapid assistance to millions of disaster victims world wide. But much remains to be done so that the international community's emergency humanitarian assistance can be provided in an effective way commensurate with the dimensions of the needs.

Two years ago the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182, which set out the guiding principles and the machinery for the United Nations system to carry out humanitarian activities. That resolution also established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to take charge of this important aspect of United Nations activities while ensuring respect for the principles of humanitarianism, neutrality and impartiality.

Since its creation, the Department has faced 108 sudden-onset natural disasters and 26 complex emergencies. On the basis of that experience, the Secretary-General's report (A/48/536) reviews activities and events since the adoption of resolution 46/182, and sketches new measures for strengthening humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

The report shows that only 56 per cent of the needs described in appeals have been met to date, which alerts Member States to take action so as to make those needs a joint concern of the international community and so as to make increased efforts to meet them.

It is reassuring that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund became operational as of May 1992. Payments of over $52 million made to date are indeed encouraging. The Fund, which is a valuable tool for sending out humanitarian assistance in the first critical days after a disaster has occurred, should be constantly replenished and its functions should be taken over by donors, whose own efforts will continue and consolidate efforts by the United Nations.

In this spirit, an increase in the financial target for the Fund should strengthen the United Nations capacity to take prompt action and should even help reduce subsequent demands for resources in the event that initial intervention in a given catastrophe is inadequate. Increased flexibility in the rules governing the Fund would also further the aim of speedy and effective intervention.

Algeria, having contributed $10,000 to the Fund in 1994, hopes that the Fund will become progressively efficient and that it will garner support from an ever-increasing number of sources.

There is a clear link between emergency situations, rehabilitation and development. For a smooth transition from emergency assistance to rehabilitation and development, emergency assistance must be provided in such a way as to enable long-term reconstruction and development to take place, and emergency measures must be seen as one step along the road towards such long-term development; this is a point made in paragraph 40 of the annex to resolution 46/182 (1991).

Moreover, as the Secretary-General stresses in his report, it is clear that

"relief operations [should not] create a dependency syndrome among recipients". *(A/48/536, para. 139)*

Humanitarian assistance must therefore be accompanied by a renewed commitment to contribute to economic growth and development, so that, through attention to the causes of many natural disasters stemming from economic problems that face developing countries, these countries are provided with the means to take responsibility for many of their possible needs in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize the importance of the role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as a centre for collecting, analysing and disseminating available information as part of the early warning system for natural disasters and emergency situations. We welcome the initial work undertaken by the Department to establish an international information system on emergency situations, and my delegation would encourage the Department to speed up work on the other

phases and to strengthen the system, because we are convinced that such a successful system will be increasingly supported by all Member States.

Mr. BHANDARE (India): My delegation wishes to compliment the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report to the General Assembly. We welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. It is useful to recall that the Charter of the United Nations itself states that one of the purposes of the Organization is to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character. India, as a founding Member of the United Nations, has consistently attached high priority to this aspect of the work of the Organization.

As members are aware, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs was established pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 46/182 and further strengthened by resolution 47/168. The Department has already surmounted several hurdles and passed a number of landmarks in the development of its fledgling assistance efforts. Having been set up primarily for the effective coordination and strengthening of the humanitarian emergency assistance programmes of the United Nations, it has already played an admirable role. The manner in which it has risen to the various appeals for assistance has been creditable indeed. In the past 18 months, in particular, the Department has coped extremely competently with the high expectations of the international community.

The guidelines for such humanitarian assistance, as laid out in resolution 46/182, have been further fine-tuned by the need for coordination among the various agencies that are faced with the onerous responsibility of carrying out humanitarian relief. These include organizations of the United Nations system such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross. The responsibility in the field for humanitarian work is frequently entrusted by the Department to the UNDP Resident Coordinator. My delegation recognizes the great value that must be attached to coordination among all these agencies and is committed to support all activities of the United Nations in furtherance of such coordination attempts as are within the scope of the General Assembly resolutions.

My delegation also attaches great importance to the parameters of such humanitarian assistance which have been spelled out in several General Assembly resolutions, in particular 46/182. These parameters have included the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality; full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States; the primary importance of the consent of the affected countries and of their appeal; and, finally, the primary role that must be given to the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. My delegation reaffirms its committed support for all humanitarian activities under the United Nations umbrella and within these specified parameters.

My delegation has been especially pleased at the responses that have been coordinated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), owing to which complex emergencies in Somalia, Angola, the Sudan and newly independent States have been so satisfactorily tackled. As we are aware, the role of the IASC received high praise at the meetings of the Economic and Social Council in July 1993. My delegation also attaches great importance to the role of the IASC and its added focus on disaster mitigation and natural-disaster prevention and preparedness. We are also appreciative of the efforts made by all agencies concerned in giving an impetus to the programmes of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction mandated in December 1989 by the General Assembly in resolution 44/236.

My delegation especially extends full support to enhanced United Nations activity in increasing capacities at the country level, the better to deal with natural disaster and sudden-onset emergencies. We urge that the provision of technological assistance that has been committed at appropriate levels in the United Nations system to assist countries in these fields be undertaken without any delay.

I should like to place on record India's appreciation for the prompt action taken by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to bring relief to the victims of the recent tragic earthquake that hit the state of Maharashtra in September 1993. The Department was quick to dispatch three members of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Stand-by Team to the area. It also made an emergency grant of $50,000. Subsequently, the Department monitored the situation round the clock with a view to mobilizing resources and distributing accurate information to the international community and the media.

This in turn led to the international community's providing substantial assistance to the earthquake victims. My country is also grateful to the international community for their support and succour in our difficult times.

The earthquake in India has underlined how urgent it is for Habitat to design and construct low-cost, earthquake-resistant and weatherproof housing in developing countries. We hope that the international community will rally round the United Nations agency concerned in supporting action in this regard.

My delegation is aware of the United Nations high level of commitment in the areas mentioned, but at the same time we should like clear distinctions to be drawn with a view to defining the relationship between the imperatives of peace-keeping and peacemaking on the one hand and, on the other, the principles of humanitarian access, which are, primarily, neutrality and impartiality.

Countries would be much better served if the United Nations system could assist at the country level with effective early-warning systems and assessment capacities, facilitating preventive action for early response by the affected country itself.

National capabilities must be consciously strengthened with a view to meeting humanitarian requirements in a cost-effective manner and on a well-prioritized basis. My delegation appreciates the efforts already under way, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, and will welcome any new initiative for strengthening national capacities in the area of disaster management and humanitarian coordination.

In all these areas and in all these efforts, my delegation would seek to emphasize the importance of clarifying the relationship between conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance.

My delegation congratulates the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and Under-Secretary-General Eliasson on the accomplishments during the last year. However, we would be failing in our duty as a Member State if we did not draw attention to the problems that have arisen whenever the distinction between conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance has been overlooked. In this connection, while reasserting our commitment to all United Nations activities in the area of humanitarian assistance based on mandated General Assembly resolutions, we should like once again to reaffirm the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States and the importance of providing humanitarian assistance with the consent of the affected country.

My delegation looks forward to further cooperation with the United Nations system in the field of humanitarian assistance.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): It has become commonplace to mention the end of the cold war as a turning-point in world affairs, a moment when the expectation that cooperation would prevail over conflict arose as a consequence of the demise of sterile confrontation between rival ideological blocs. Had that expectation been more than an illusion, we could be experiencing the benefits that would result from a concerted focus on raising the living standards of each and every human being, particularly the most disadvantaged.

The moment when that vision can be realized continues to fade into the future, and, in the meanwhile, we are forced to spend our energies on enhancing palliative measures to the detriment of permanent solutions. And to compound the folly of this short-sighted outlook, the violent forces of nature are taking an ever-increasing toll through a growing number of disasters.

In the context of those disasters, we are indebted to Ambassador Jan Eliasson for his untiring efforts; his commitment and dedication have made it possible to strengthen the coordination of United Nations activities in the field of humanitarian assistance.

The report before us underlines the magnitude of the problem we face, with 108 sudden natural disasters and 26 complex emergencies over the last two years. We concur with the conclusion that the validity of resolution 46/182 in providing the framework for coordinating relief assistance has been demonstrated by experience to date.

The most notable accomplishment of resolution 46/182 is the establishment of the guiding principles for providing humanitarian assistance. Through extensive and constructive debate, a consensus agreement was reached on the framework within which such assistance should be extended, in response to requests from governments, for the relief of populations suffering the consequences of natural disasters and other emergencies. Our task, therefore, is not to review the provisions of resolution 46/182 but rather to seek ways of further enhancing, within the established framework, the mechanisms for coordinating humanitarian assistance.

The Economic and Social Council, during the coordination segment of its substantive session this year, considered the issue in detail, and has adopted a set of agreed conclusions to this end.

At this point, I think it would be very useful if we could clarify the exact nature of those agreed conclusions. As my delegation pointed out during the Second Committee's debate on agenda item 12, agreed conclusions

represent a clear set of directives to the system that have evident legislative authority. To propose, however, that such conclusions represent a precedent for selectively altering the delicate balance of resolution 46/182 would seriously undermine the concept, as we would have to revert to lengthy, word-by-word negotiations on the outcome of the coordination segment, thus sacrificing the evident progress represented by the innovative mechanism of agreed conclusions.

In his report, the Secretary-General has outlined some of the difficulties encountered and has proposed, for consideration by the General Assembly, some measures for strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance, on which I should like to comment.

One area of particular concern, as is evident from the report, lies in the mechanisms for funding humanitarian assistance.

The first aspect relates to the volume of resources available for emergency response through the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). There is apparent progress in the agility of the Fund in disbursing resources in a timely manner; we encourage further effort to ensure that resources are available in the field as quickly as possible, for the initial phase is the most critical in the onset of emergencies.

The problem resides in the reimbursements to the Fund, which have on average taken six to eight months - a factor which is straining the capacity of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to respond to new emergencies, with the available resources currently at the level of $19 million. This problem could become even worse if the scope of the Fund is expanded.

The remedy proposed by the Secretary-General is an increase in the size of the Fund. Donor countries, on the other hand, are of the view that more timely reimbursements would maintain the Fund at adequate levels. Both propositions would significantly strengthen the Fund's ability to respond to emergencies, though both depend on a firm commitment of donors, either by contributing additional voluntary resources to the Fund or by speeding up the processes for responding to consolidated appeals and thus making possible prompt reimbursements to the Fund. It would seem to us, however, that increasing the size of the Fund would be a more practical solution, as it would address the issue on a more permanent basis, without the need for a constant struggle to keep reimbursements up to date.

Another difficulty encountered, according to the report, is the lack of funding to support field-level coordinating arrangements and for the Emergency Relief Coordinator to discharge functions in the early stages of an emergency in regard to which no other operational agency has specific responsibility.

The doubts we expressed at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the arrangements proposed for these issues - most notably allowing the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to draw on CERF - remain. These doubts refer essentially to the potential for undermining CERF, as the reimbursement of funds used to these ends is in no way assured - particularly since the report notes that

> "requests for the funding of field coordination arrangements ... remain the most under-funded components". *(A/48/536, para. 56)*

Additionally, we believe that these measures entail the risk that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would increasingly take over operational functions, thereby losing its main comparative advantage in the coordination of humanitarian assistance - namely, that of not competing directly with agencies on an operational level. We therefore consider that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, bringing together agencies and organizations working at the field level, is the most appropriate forum for deliberating on and presenting recommendations for addressing this issue.

As for the proposed expansion of the scope of CERF, we share the view that, at this stage, such an expansion should be limited to the International Organization for Migration. We deem it essential, however, that access to CERF resources entail full compliance with financial regulations, particularly with reference to reimbursement, as well as with reference to the leadership role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, so as to ensure the Fund's financial stability and the coordination ends for which it was established.

One of the most critical issues surrounding the humanitarian assistance activities of the United Nations system at present is, as highlighted in the report,

> "the need to define the relationship between the imperatives of peace-keeping and peacemaking and the principles of humanitarian access, neutrality and impartiality". *(A/48/536, para. 45)*

As I stated earlier, the principles established by resolution 46/182 are of paramount importance in guiding all future deliberations on the issue. Among these, the central element is the determination that

"Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality". *(resolution 46/182, annex, para. 2)*

We do not insist on these points only as a matter of abstract legal principle: we insist on them above all because they are concretely essential for ensuring the long-term effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. The irrevocable relevance of the principle of neutrality and impartiality lies in the fact that if those who deliver humanitarian relief were to be perceived as one-sided or as partial, then access to victims of emergencies and the very functioning of relief activities could be severely hampered.

Those guiding principles also call for a guarded approach to the question of the relationship between humanitarian action and initiatives of a political or a military nature. This is, of course, a manifold relationship, as those who are working on the ground will be able to tell us. In particular, it is important to note that the achievements attained in the delivery of humanitarian relief contribute in a significant way to promoting solutions to problems of a political nature. In situations of conflict, the improvement of the humanitarian situation tends to increase confidence between the parties and thus contributes to the success of diplomatic efforts. Moreover, there is an obvious need for coordination of decentralized initiatives undertaken by the United Nations with regard to specific situations, so as to ensure a rational utilization of limited resources.

Nevertheless, recognizing these facts should not lead us to overlook the need for humanitarian action to pursue its own logic, to follow its own drumbeat, in strict accordance with its own guiding principles. An excessive proximity between humanitarian efforts and political efforts is not in the interest of either. In the final analysis, the only real guarantee of the effectiveness of humanitarian action is the very legitimacy of such action. The logic that is at work here is that relief action is and must be effective because it is strictly humanitarian, and because it is perceived as strictly humanitarian. Thus, while humanitarian action by the United Nations can and must take advantage of the resources of the Organization, including in the area of peace-keeping, it must not be made contingent on initiatives of a political nature, let alone on the use of military force.

I would like to conclude by expressing the Brazilian Government's appreciation to the men and women who are working every day, with anonymous devotion, often in extremely difficult and dangerous situations, to bring relief to those who are in need. These men and women deserve our wholehearted gratitude and our constant support. Brazil will continue to work, in the General Assembly and in other forums, to contribute to improving conditions so that their noble work can be carried out in safety and dignity.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

60th PLENARY MEETING

Monday, 22 November 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

Vice-President: Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania)

Vice-President: Mr. KHERRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Vice-President: Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Nyakyi (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 27

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/468 and Add.1)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.26)

The PRESIDENT: I call upon the representative of the Sudan to introduce the draft resolution in document A/48/L.26.

Mr. EL TINAY (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It is an honour for me to introduce, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, draft resolution A/48/L.26, submitted under agenda item 27, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States".

Members will recall that the General Assembly set the parameters of that cooperation in its resolution 36/24 wherein the League of Arab States was invited to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs as an observer. In that resolution the General Assembly recognized the importance of continued close cooperation by the United Nations and its specialized agencies with the League of Arab States in promoting social and economic development. That resolution also requested the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to strengthen cooperation at the political, economic, cultural and administrative levels between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

Since 1981, such cooperation on all those levels has increased, and, at its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General in resolution 47/12 to continue to strengthen cooperation for the purpose of implementing United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East with the aim of achieving a just, comprehensive and durable solution to the conflict in that region. That resolution also highlighted the efficacy of cooperation between the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the United Nations Secretariat in realizing the purposes and principles of the Charter and in facilitating the implementation of the proposals adopted at the Tunis meeting in 1983, as well as the need to hold annual coordinating meetings between the General Secretariat and the United Nations.

The frameworks of cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations have been defined and its targets set with regard to a highly sensitive region that has been sorely tried throughout its recent history. The Organization's credibility itself has been called into question. If we are to look to the future with confidence,

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-87231 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.60
2 December 1993

ENGLISH

we must turn away from the past, with all its negative aspects. That is the path the Arab world has chosen on the basis of its trust in the precepts of morality and the need fully to abide by the norms of international legality, particularly in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict, where the full implementation of such principles should enable the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State on their own soil and restore all the Arab territories which have been occupied since 1967.

The world is moving steadily towards an age of regional groupings and, consequently, towards the achievement of the goals of lasting peace and development. In order for such goals to be achieved, all regional groupings should be allowed to play their part in the common endeavour of building the sort of future envisioned by the Charter for all peoples. However, in aspiring after such a future and in looking forward to peace, we can never lose sight of our human dignity or accept to become a nation that is relegated to the status of a second class citizen of planet Earth.

Draft resolution A/48/L.26 on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States that is now before the General Assembly, contrary to last year's resolution, focuses on strengthening that cooperation on the administrative and technical levels. The paragraphs relating to political aspects have been excluded, not because of any irrelevancy but because they have been considered to relate to other draft resolutions that have a political bearing. On the other hand, the preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution underscore the desire of the Arab League to strengthen the current close ties with the United Nations in the political, economic, social, humanitarian, cultural and administrative fields with a view to realizing the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The preambular paragraphs also welcome the general meeting in Geneva last August between representatives of the United Nations General Secretariat, the General Secretariat of the Arab League and the specialized agencies of both organizations, in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the first meeting of cooperation between the two organizations.

The draft resolution, in its operative paragraphs, welcomes the Secretary-General's report, commends the continued efforts of the League of Arab States to promote multilateral cooperation amongst the Arab States and requests the United Nations system to continue to lend its support within this framework. It also takes note of the *conclusions and recommendations adopted by the general* meeting held at Geneva, to which I have just referred.

In operative paragraph 4 the General Assembly expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the follow-up action taken by him to implement the proposals adopted at the meetings between the representatives of the secretariats of the two organizations towards those goals.

In general, the draft resolution's operative paragraphs call for further and closer cooperation between the United Nations, the League of Arab States and all the specialized and subsidiary organizations of the two bodies, with a view to achieving progress in the economic, social and development fields.

In the draft resolution's operative paragraphs, especially the tenth, the General Assembly decides that a general meeting between the United Nations and the League of Arab States should take place once every two years for the purpose of dealing with questions of importance in the development of the Arab States; and, in the eleventh operative paragraph, that the next general meeting on cooperation between representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations should be held in 1995.

Operative paragraph 12 calls for periodic consultations between representatives of the Secretariat of the United Nations and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States. The General Assembly also decides to remain seized of the issues of cooperation between the two organizations.

The States members of the Arab League are fully aware of their responsibilities at this crucial juncture in the region's history. The League of Arab States calls for serious, constructive and fruitful cooperation with all members of the international community with the aim of achieving a lasting, comprehensive, just and overdue solution to conflicts whose consequences will otherwise be felt by future generations.

On this basis, we call for the consensus adoption of the draft resolution that is before the Assembly, just as we call for consensus in respect of draft resolutions concerning cooperation between the United Nations and all other regional organizations.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. ABOUL-NASR (League of Arab States) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: As this is my first speech before the General Assembly at its current session, I should like to extend to Mr. Insanally of Guyana our congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of the Assembly for the session, and extend to him our best wishes. Mr. Insanally's election to this important post is an expression of the international community's confidence in his political ability and of the esteem in which it holds his country, Guyana.

Since its inception in 1945 - the year in which the United Nations was established - the League of Arab States has striven to emphasize and strengthen cooperation with the United Nations. It has followed with interest the General Assembly's sessions, as well as the resolutions adopted by the Assembly since 1950, at which time the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to invite the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to attend the Assembly's sessions as an Observer. This cooperation was further developed in 1981, when the General Assembly asked the League of Arab States to participate in the work of all its other organs as well as that of the specialized agencies. The Assembly also asked the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations at the administrative, cultural, political and economic levels.

In June 1983, an important high-level meeting was held in Tunisia between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and their specialized agencies. This was followed by two other meetings in Geneva in 1988 and 1990. In those meetings, agreement was reached on cooperation between the two organizations in six areas - international peace and security; agriculture and food production; manpower, trade, industry and the environment; social questions; information, culture and education; and communications. In 1989, the Secretariats of the two organizations signed another cooperation agreement. The purpose of that agreement was to secure effective coordination of the work and programmes of the two bodies in respect of specified matters and to provide for consultation and for the exchange of representatives.

Several other agreements between the United Nations and the League of Arab States and their specialized agencies were entered into with a view to strengthening cooperation in various fields. Cooperation between these bodies was crowned with the meeting at Geneva, last August, in which representatives of the two organizations and their specialized agencies took part. This meeting led to further arrangements for future cooperation in various fields - for example, international peace and security; technical, financial and economic matters connected with development; and respect for human rights - and for the consolidation of further cooperation in the programmes of the two organizations in their respective fields of competence. Details of these are given in documents A/48/468 and Add.1.

The new agreement underscores the fact that the League of Arab States and the United Nations are partners in formulating and implementing the programmes and activities that relate to the consolidation of international peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development in the Arab world as well as in coordinating long-term programmes that aim at furthering cooperation between the two organizations.

Today's world faces the challenge of a new international situation that is characterized by numerous changes in regional and international relations. This puts the onus on the United Nations to seek solutions to a multiplicity of questions and particularly to those issues which have surfaced in the wake of the cold war to threaten peace and security in many parts of the world.

The League of Arab States follows with great interest the efforts deployed by the United Nations and its Secretary-General in searching for peaceful solutions to those problems. In this respect, the League wishes to reiterate its support for the role of the world Organization and the resolve to cooperate with it in consolidating peace, security and stability, particularly in our region.

The League of Arab States has expressed its appreciation of and support for the views and recommendations set out by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report "An Agenda for Peace" *(A/47/277)* and particularly for the contents of that Agenda relating to cooperation with regional arrangements in implementation of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

In this respect, I wish to commend the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, particularly in the field of preventive diplomacy, with the aim of reaching peaceful solutions to some of the disputes in our region. I would mention in particular the cooperation between the two organizations and other regional organizations in trying to put an end to the conflict in Somalia and to reconcile the various factions there. The League of Arab States has participated in all the meetings the United Nations has called for in this respect with a view to coordinating the efforts deployed to help our brotherly Somali people put an end to its plight. The League of Arab States will accept the Secretary-General's invitation to participate in the forthcoming meeting scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa at the end of this month.

The Palestinian question and the question of the Middle East continue to be at the top of the League's concerns. The League's Council has urged, in its last meeting, that the peace process should continue until we achieve the objective of consolidating the underpinnings of comprehensive and permanent peace on the basis of international legality, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). This would lead to complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Al-Quds and thus usher in a new era in the Middle East that would help all the region's peoples to work together for development and prosperity.

In this context, the Council of the League of Arab States, at its one-hundredth meeting in September 1993, issued a statement wherein it considered the Declaration of Principles between the Palestinians and the Israelis to be an important first step towards the objective of realizing the land-for-peace principle that should be followed urgently, by other steps on all the other tracks and should ensure the achievement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return of Palestinian refugees since 1948, in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

The peoples of the world expect the role of the United Nations to be based on respect for and adherence to the principles of the Charter, respect for and defence of the rights and sovereignty of all States on their territories, respect for the obligations arising from all treaties, the defence of fundamental human rights, and cooperation with all, on an equal footing, with the same standard.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm that our support for the United Nations stems from the commitment by the United Nations to the purposes and principles of its Charter and from our desire, as a regional organization, to continue to support and consolidate the role of the United Nations in all fields so that a comprehensive and just peace may be reached on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.26.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt that draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/48/L.26 was adopted (resolution 48/21).

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on representatives wishing to explain their position.

May I remind the Assembly that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. JACOB (Israel): The delegation of Israel joined the consensus on the draft resolution just adopted because we are committed to the establishment of peace with our neighbours. We are encouraged by the recent signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestinians, and the Agreed Common Agenda between Israel and Jordan. We hope that these breakthroughs will enable us to achieve further progress in the peace process. Our goal is to sign formal peace treaties with each of our neighbours.

Peace and economic cooperation go hand in hand. We cannot create one without being equally committed to the other. Economic ties based on equality and mutual interests constitute an important step in building a solid and lasting peace between countries. Economic cooperation in the Middle East can serve not only the interests of the countries in the region, but also those of the entire world community. Economic cooperation provides opportunities for regional development and economic growth, and helps open new doors to world markets. Possible areas of regional cooperation include: agriculture, energy, infrastructure, tourism and health.

Given the enormous advantages of regional economic cooperation, we would like to express our regret that the League of Arab States persists in maintaining its policy of economic boycott against Israel. It should be noted that this boycott officially began in December 1945, two and a half years before the State of Israel was born. Economic boycott runs counter to the principles of the peace process and delays reconciliation between countries of the region. We call upon the League of Arab States and its members to put an end to this policy and to establish normal political and economic ties with Israel.

The resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States is the first resolution adopted by the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly on an issue related to the Middle East. We are pleased that it was possible to adopt this resolution by consensus and look forward to the adoption of additional resolutions using the same procedure. In this respect we would like to make the following observation: We believe that the criterion for adopting resolutions during this session of the Assembly on the Middle East should not be the content, tone or language used in previous resolutions: rather, the criterion should reflect the positive developments that have occurred in the framework of the peace process and our hopes for a better future for our region. We call upon members of the League of Arab

States to help us in achieving this goal. Such changes would also serve to make resolutions adopted by this session of the General Assembly more in tune with the new realities in the Middle East.

Mr. SHERMAN (United States of America): The United States was pleased to join in the consensus on this resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The first three years a draft resolution was introduced on this subject, 1981 to 1983, the United States joined in the consensus. From 1984 to 1992, however, for well-known reasons the United States could not join in the consensus, although we continued to support increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Arab League.

We are pleased that the sponsors of this resolution have modified the language of the resolution. Now it is a technical resolution focusing on cooperation between the United Nations and a regional organization, like other such resolutions. Thus, we joined in the consensus. The United States seeks to support the work of the Arab League and supports increased cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States.

Adopting this resolution by consensus was consonant with the new spirit of progress in the Middle East peace process, as reflected by recent dramatic breakthroughs. We all recognize that much hard work remains to be done in implementing agreements signed and in reaching further agreements between the parties directly concerned to achieve the goal of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Other actions, such as eliminating the outdated Arab boycott, could greatly assist in this process.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 27?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 28

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/409)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.20)

The PRESIDENT: I call first on the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.20.

Mr. GUILLEN (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I am honoured to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.20, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", and sponsored by the 27 States members of the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

The main goal of the draft resolution is to strengthen and broaden cooperation between the United Nations system and SELA, at a time when it is necessary to face new problems and find solutions that integrate the global vision of the United Nations and the specific contributions that regional entities can make. Thus, the draft resolution aims at truly implementing in our region the purposes of the United Nations.

Since activities related to the economic and social development of our countries are accorded top priority - and this is at the basis of our Organization - and since it is imperative that there be a new agenda for development addressing future challenges at the dawn of a new century, we think it fitting further to improve and strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations system and regional economic systems. The prevailing trends in the world economy, marked by the globalization of economic activities, growing interdependence and the consolidation of regional spheres, are a true indication of the need for the Organization to remain in the vanguard of political and economic events.

Regional mechanisms, such as SELA with its double focus on economic cooperation and economic harmonization, can be a key element in coordinating the international community's efforts on a world-wide scale with the regional implementation of the measures generated by those efforts.

We note that the budget of the United Nations is gradually shifting towards activities in the areas of peace-keeping, the defence of democracy and respect for human rights. These are matters of paramount importance, whose high-minded purposes we support. But there is a dangerous imbalance related to the continuing decline in investment in economic activities connected to cooperation, the promotion of trade in the context of free competition, and sustainable development: fundamental elements of the structural basis of the world's problems. In that connection, we strongly support the concept of preventive development offered for our consideration by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a few days ago.

It is precisely in that area that we need to take advantage of the coordinated presence of regional economic systems, in each region, with a beneficial

installed capacity and infrastructure and with experts, projects and experience eager to share the knowledge that can mesh perfectly with the activities of the United Nations. This would result in enhanced effectiveness. An ever more specialized world needs the competitive advantages that regional economic systems like SELA can offer.

Despite constraints on new funding, we can try to implement imaginative proposals demonstrating the opportunity offered to our countries by stepped-up cooperation between the United Nations and SELA. We have had some experience in that regard, which should be followed up and developed, such as the close cooperation between UNDP and SELA in the area of technical cooperation between developing countries. Moreover, thanks to UNDP's programme of support for SELA, Latin American delegations have been given help at the multilateral trade negotiations of the Uruguay Round. There is a reference to UNDP's support in paragraph 35 of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/409).

This year, another regional project began - as mentioned in paragraph 46 of the report - in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): LATINTRADE. It will help SELA member States with projects related to technical cooperation on international trade and trade relations in Latin America and the Caribbean in the post-Uruguay-Round era.

Besides activities already under way, we think account should be taken of helpful ideas that would enable us to return to the consideration of the concept of an up-to-date agenda for development, concerning which the current Administrator of UNDP, Mr. Speth, made some important comments only a few days ago. SELA already has studies and proposals on this matter; these have been considered at the highest regional level, and could now be usefully explored for the common good.

We believe that the time has come to increase cooperation in areas that are increasingly important for what we all advocate and aspire to: sustainable human development.

The preamble of the draft resolution refers specifically to the many activities carried out by SELA together with various bodies of the United Nations system, as well as to SELA's carrying out of priority programmes for the economic development of the countries of our region.

In the operative part the General Assembly takes note with satisfaction of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/409) and urges the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Development Programme to expand and strengthen their coordination and support activities with SELA; it also urges the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to intensify their cooperation with the activities of this regional agency. In addition, both the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Permanent Secretary of SELA are requested to assess the implementation of the cooperation Agreement currently in force, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

The draft resolution contains nothing controversial, and it reflects the hopes of the Latin American and Caribbean countries that cooperation between the United Nations and SELA will be expanded and strengthened. Accordingly, the Peruvian delegation, on behalf of all the co-sponsors, comprising the entire membership of SELA, hopes that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. ARELLANO (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: In an era of deep and continuing change in the international political and economic arena, Latin America and the Caribbean are persevering in a process of unprecedented modernization and reform. The region is now efficiently and actively becoming part of the major global trends of the world economy. In recent years Latin America and the Caribbean have been making completely new efforts at integration and cooperation, in the most varied and imaginative ways, including bilateral and multilateral agreements and frameworks for extraregional participation.

In this context, the Latin American Economic System (SELA) has become a catalyst for regional agreement and cooperation. The work it is now doing reflects the will of Governments in the region to undertake joint activities in areas of common interest.

Through ongoing analysis, SELA is contributing to bringing its member States closer together and encouraging a coming together of interests and mechanisms for cooperation.

Cooperation between our organizations is just one of the many ways in which mechanisms are being established for collaboration in development. The agenda item we are considering shows how fruitful those joint efforts can be.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on this item, which describes the many and growing activities being carried out by the United Nations together with SELA. We note with satisfaction that in recent years this cooperation has been broadened and deepened. The list of agencies within the United Nations system participating in

these efforts includes many whose mandates are directly related to encouraging and strengthening development.

The broad and positive cooperation between SELA and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is of particular importance. Here I would like to highlight the agreement to establish a social project bank and an information and communications network to support the activities of the inter-agency group on integrated social policies, including preparations for the World Summit for Social Development. Cooperation between the two bodies has now extended to other areas that are important for our countries, such as finance and trade.

In the domain of technical cooperation, the United Nations Development Programme has been contributing in many different ways to SELA's support and cooperation activities to benefit our region. Action is being taken within the framework of a joint project involving innovative areas of cooperation. We reiterate in this regard that we should continue to strengthen cooperation in the struggle against poverty. We are concerned, however, over the reduction in financial resources being made available for technical cooperation for development in general and for Latin American projects, promoted through SELA, in particular.

With the participation of specialized agencies of the system, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, we have been exploring in recent months the potential of cooperation in agriculture, and in many cases have made it a reality. Activities in other key development areas, such as science and technology, the environment, education and public health, have been broadened, thanks to the participation of agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization. We welcome in particular the growing cooperation with international financial institutions.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, Latin America and the Caribbean look forward with greater optimism to the future. The economic and political reforms of recent years have improved the region's development prospects. Efforts such as those being made by SELA and the United Nations system are a positive contribution.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Venezuela, as a member of the Latin American Economic System (SELA), and its host country, fully supports draft resolution A/48/L.20, which was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Peru.

The Latin American Economic System has offered its members invaluable services ever since it was established by the Panama Convention of 1975. Throughout its existence, member States have been able to strengthen their mutual relations and their activities outside the region through initiatives relating to consultations and coordination as well as to intra-regional cooperation. These initiatives have derived in large part from joint positions in many international forums, particularly here at the United Nations, and in mechanisms for cooperation dealing with many different aspects of our economies. Our efforts have been productive and have enabled our region to be an active participant in endeavours by this Organization and its specialized agencies to channel international cooperation for development.

The outcome of the XIX Latin American Council, which was held last October in Caracas, showed the scope of the issues that concern our region and link SELA to the United Nations. Among them, I would like to highlight the mandate given SELA to cooperate in preparing Latin America and the Caribbean for the World Summit for Social Development and for the fifth session of the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; its role in supporting member countries in the area of environment and development; its work in assessment of and follow-up to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations; and its efforts to increase coordination of the various integration projects within our region.

The links between SELA and the United Nations are particularly relevant in these areas, as is the crucial role that must be played by the Organization and the United Nations system in providing assistance to our regional forum.

SELA is a small organization, and it is designed primarily to be an effective one. Member States rely on its analyses to guide us in taking our positions in the multilateral economic area, in promoting our efforts towards economic integration and complementarity, and in strengthening high-level dialogue on our region's position in the international context. Stable and significant international cooperation in the projects that the member States recommend to it has always been of immense importance. In this, the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean have played a crucial role, as

have many other bodies in the system; this is, indeed, reflected in the Secretary-General's report.

While thanking all these agencies for their technical and financial support for SELA's activities, we call on them to strengthen, broaden and diversify them. The results that have been achieved so far fully justify this, and we have no doubt as to their potential for the future of the region.

The Venezuelan delegation is happy to join in sponsoring draft resolution A/48/L.20, and is confident that it will be adopted by consensus.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/3 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the Observer of the Latin American Economic System.

Mr. DE ROJAS (Latin American Economic System (SELA)) *(interpretation from Spanish):* On behalf of the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Economic System, I should like to thank, in advance, the members of the Assembly for the resolution (A/48/L.20) they intend to adopt; in particular, I should like to thank the delegations of Peru and the other Latin American and Caribbean countries that introduced it, and those other delegations that have given it their generous support.

We are convinced that implementing the resolution will promote, as the text itself says, a broadening and deepening of coordination and mutual support activities between the United Nations and SELA; there are already many of these, as is apparent from the Secretary-General's report (A/48/409). In effect, since the new Agreement on cooperation between the two bodies was signed two years ago and since resolution 47/13 - which is being reaffirmed today - was adopted, we have witnessed a vigorous growth in cooperation and joint work, not only with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Secretariat units in New York and Geneva, but also with various other bodies and specialized agencies in the system, such as, for example, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the others highlighted in the Secretary-General's report.

I shall not list the various cooperation activities that SELA is conducting with these bodies because they are described in detail in the Secretary-General's report, but I would like to stress the support given by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through both its Regional Office for Latin America and its special unit for technical cooperation among developing countries, because there are many specific references to the joint SELA/UNDP projects now under way that refer to the very projects that are facilitating the implementation of a great many of these activities.

Last month in Caracas, we held the nineteenth regular annual session of the Latin American Council, SELA's supreme body. At that session the guidelines for the programme of work for the coming year were adopted, along with a series of conclusions, decisions and declarations on matters of interest to the United Nations that are on the Assembly's agenda at its forty-eighth session. The report of the Council's session will soon be circulated as an official document.

I should like to take this opportunity to comment briefly on some of these aspects in order to enable the delegation present to appreciate the variety and wealth of the programme of work now being carried out by the Latin American Economic System; these have to do with two of its main springboards - regional harmonization and cooperation.

First, I should mention the fact that the SELA member States found this session of the Latin American Council an opportune moment for issuing a special declaration on the situation in the Republic of Haiti, and recommended that the Permanent Secretariat should identify - as soon as the constitutional order in Haiti was restored - elements for a programme of cooperation that SELA could submit to Haiti with a view to collaborating on promoting that country's socio-economic development.

On two subjects of great immediacy and special importance for our region, the Council decided to issue outline declarations of political support for the entry into force of the North American Free Trade Association Treaty - believing that the entry into force of that Treaty must open up new opportunities for trade and development throughout the hemisphere - and for the successful conclusion, with global and balanced results, of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Also, indications of support for the renewed process of economic integration in the Central American subregion were given, along with expressions of the need to take into account the particular situation of the small countries of the Caribbean in the ongoing process of trade liberalization.

Concerning the programme of work itself, three recommendations by the Latin American Council, concerning three subjects of particular importance for the United Nations agenda, should be noted: these are, first, the environment and development, in which the Council seeks to ensure that there is a coordinated position on the

part of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development; secondly, concerning the problems involved in social development in the context of adjustment processes and in the preparations for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development - to which representatives who have spoken before me have referred - where the Permanent Secretariat is requested to promote and collaborate actively, together with ECLAC and UNESCO, in the preparation of the region's position before the Summit; and, thirdly, in connection with the "agenda for development", which was also mentioned, where the Permanent Secretariat is requested to provide the background for an analysis of the balance and prospects for relations between the countries in the region and the Bretton Woods institutions on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of those institutions; this is a central aspect of the resolution on this subject that was submitted last year.

Important references were also made to the subjects of foreign debt and funding for development; international trade; multilateral negotiations; industrial and technological policy; intellectual property; economic relations with countries and groupings outside the region; and the formulation of global strategies for external economic action for the region in the face of the new challenges and processes taking place in the world.

In connection with the important subject of convergence for the regional and subregional integration processes, the Council supported an initiative by the Permanent Secretariat to promote, with the support of ECLAC and the UNCTAD/regional programme of technical cooperation on international trade and trade relations (LATINTRADE) project, the holding of a meeting between those in charge of trade policy in the 27 SELA member States and representatives of the various existing regional integration processes and schemes, with a view to exchanging information and experiences and facilitating a gradual harmonization of our countries' various instruments in order to promote the formation of a regional common economic area.

Finally, three separate decisions were taken on the following subjects: recognition by international bodies and other entities of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA; technical cooperation in general and cooperation between the developing countries in particular, including a decision to harmonize the regional position, with the sixth cycle of UNDP's programming in view; and the need to increase the financial and technical resources available for international cooperation directed towards the Latin American and Caribbean region from both bilateral and multilateral sources.

All of these activities, along with many others now being planned, serve as the background for the five major objectives set out by the Permanent Secretary of SELA to define and guide that body's activities in the coming years.

These are, first, to adapt more fully to the new international dynamic and to the economic and social processes taking place within the region; secondly, to focus on specific items that will have a multiplier effect in the areas of trade, finance and investment, and industry and technological innovation, in relation to countries outside of the region and international economic bodies; thirdly, to establish a better relationship between the various subregions through SELA programmes with each of them and through the promotion of activities between them; fourthly, to develop effective coordination and cooperation with other regional and subregional bodies so as to make optimum use of the overall institutional potential; and fifthly, to develop activities that transcend exclusive linkage with governments, enlarging them by establishing activities with other sectors of society, particularly the business sector, labour, parliaments and universities.

We are confident that SELA knows how to take up the challenges of this new age - and how to respond to the wishes of its member States - and this will certainly be strengthened through ever-greater cooperation with the rest of the international community, at the regional and global levels, and in particular with this Organization and the entire United Nations system.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.20. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/48/L.20 was adopted (resolution 48/22).

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 29

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/422 and Add.1)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.27)

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.27.

Mr. MARKER (Pakistan): On behalf of the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.27, dated 19 November 1993 and entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". The objective of this draft resolution is to ensure the further strengthening and consolidation of the extremely useful cooperation which exists between these two organizations.

Since its inception, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has remained deeply committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is therefore essential that the two organizations continue to cooperate in promoting their common objectives of preserving peace and security and promoting social and economic development. We, the members of the OIC, remain convinced of the ever-present need for increased cooperation between our organization and the United Nations in the pursuit of our common goals. The member States of the OIC are conscious that our organization's role is cast in the overall framework of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Charter of the OIC explicitly reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Charter and to fundamental human rights. It further emphasizes the determination of its members to contribute towards the attainment of progress, freedom and justice throughout the world by promoting global peace and security.

Guided by the spirit of seeking the furtherance of common goals with the United Nations, the OIC has made consistent efforts to expand and consolidate cooperation with this world body ever since it obtained observer status in 1975. The United Nations has been represented at the OIC ministerial conferences and summit meetings by special representatives of the Secretary-General and, whenever possible, by the Secretary-General himself. The efforts of the Secretary-General to broaden the extent of the existing cooperation between our two organizations are highly appreciated by the Islamic community.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this context, I should like to express our particular gratitude to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the excellent report he has submitted to the General Assembly in document A/48/422 and Add.1, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. As is brought out in this report, the Organization of the Islamic Conference continues to forge its cooperation in a number of fields with the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, in the pursuit of the aims and objectives of its charter and with a view to complementing the efforts of the United Nations in important areas of common concern, has at all its meetings, including the summit- and ministerial-level conferences, adopted numerous resolutions on important global issues, such as disarmament, international peace and security, decolonization, the right of self-determination, human rights, and economic and technological development.

For this purpose, the Conference has also taken a number of initiatives, both within and outside the United Nations. As a manifestation of the OIC's concrete contribution, I should like to mention that, in its last special ministerial meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in April 1993, it decided to offer to the United Nations over 20,000 troops belonging to its members for peace-keeping duties in the United Nations Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia. Similarly, the OIC has remained in the forefront of promoting the cause of peace and the end of conflicts around the world.

The draft resolution which I have the honour to introduce today is similar to resolutions adopted under this item at earlier sessions of the General Assembly. It represents the desire of the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for greater cooperation with the United Nations in our common search for solutions to global problems.

In the preamble, the General Assembly stresses its conviction that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and it recognizes the need for closer cooperation between the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized institutions in the

implementation of the proposals adopted at the coordination meeting of the focal points of the lead agencies of the two organizations.

In the operative paragraphs, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations system and the OIC to serve the mutual interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. It requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to continue encouraging the convening of sectoral meetings in the priority areas of cooperation.

Under the draft resolution, the Assembly would also request the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue to cooperate in their common search for solutions to global problems, such as those relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, fundamental human rights and economic and technical development. It would encourage specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue to expand cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It would request that a general meeting of the secretariats of the two organizations and the specialized institutions be organized at Geneva in May 1994. It would urge the United Nations to provide technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

On behalf of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, I would request the members of the Assembly to support the draft resolution and to facilitate its adoption by consensus.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. ANSAY (Organization of the Islamic Conference): It is a privilege for me to address the General Assembly again on an item of particular importance to the United Nations and the Organization I represent, namely, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference".

As this is the first time I have spoken at this session of the Assembly, allow me to begin, Sir, by extending our warmest congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador Insanally on his election to the high office of President of the General Assembly. His election is a tribute to his well-known personal qualities, to his vast experience and to his country, Guyana. I can assure the President that he can count on the full cooperation of my organization as he discharges his responsibilities.

I would like at the same time to pay a tribute to His Excellency Mr. Ganev, the former Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, who served in an outstanding manner as the President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

I wish also to seize this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, not only for his excellent report which is before us (A/48/422 and Add.1) but also for the significant contribution he has made to the effectiveness and smooth functioning of this world body. His numerous achievements in the name of peace during a short span of time speak for themselves. We wish him the best in the future and assure him of our full cooperation in the undertakings he has initiated, in the form of particular cooperation between the United Nations and our organization relating to specific matters.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate our sister international, intergovernmental and regional organizations for the adoption by consensus of the resolutions providing for cooperation between the United Nations and their respective bodies. The unanimous adoption of the resolution on cooperation between the League of Arab States and the United Nations is a source of particular joy for us. This indeed signifies the new spirit of progress prevailing in the Middle East peace process.

The founding fathers and the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference clearly identified from the outset the role of our organization within the overall framework of the United Nations Charter. The charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference underlines the determination of its 51 member States to make effective contributions to the enrichment of humankind and the achievement of progress, freedom and justice throughout the world by promoting global peace and security.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference derives its inspiration from the eternal and noble message of Islam, and its establishment was predicated on the principles of peace, harmony, tolerance, equality and justice for all.

The charter of our organization reaffirms the commitment of our members to the Charter of the United Nations. The perceptions of the members of our organization, all of which are also Members of the United

Nations, are identical to those of the vast majority of the United Nations membership on important international issues. It is only natural that the two organizations should work closely together to promote the ideals, principles and objectives that they share.

Since its inception, in 1969, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has adopted numerous resolutions and declarations, both at the summit level and at the level of meetings of Foreign Ministers, addressing the issues that confront the Islamic world as well as important global developments relating to international peace and security, disarmament, human rights, minorities and decolonization and issues relating to socio-economic development.

Cooperation between the two organizations received an important boost in 1975, when the Organization of the Islamic Conference was granted observer status by the United Nations. By the late 1970s, it was felt that the ever-increasing interaction of the two organizations should be given an institutional framework in which the secretariats and the specialized agencies, organs and bodies of the two organizations could hold regular consultations to review their ongoing work and to examine the possibilities of expanding and enlarging their areas of cooperation.

Since the adoption in 1980 of General Assembly resolution 35/36, which was the first resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a number of cooperation agreements have been concluded by our organization with specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the United Nations bodies concerned with technical cooperation for development.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference has been mutually satisfactory and has been developing in a meaningful manner. Ever since the first meeting, held in 1983, between the representatives of the Secretariats of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions and those of the United Nations system, the two organizations have expanded their cooperation on a number of important projects in the nine already-identified priority areas in social, economic and cultural fields; these are described in the Secretary-General's report of 24 September 1993. Since 1983, the two organizations have made concerted efforts in the common search for solutions to regional as well as international conflicts and to problems relating to peace and security and economic, social and cultural development, as well as in combating terrorism and working to protect human rights. Thus, 1993 marks the tenth year of active cooperation between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations.

At the same time, the cooperation in the field between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations relating to the current difficult situation in Somalia is continuing, and our organization is doing its utmost to assist the United Nations in resolving the current tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/13, the two organizations held a sectoral meeting on "Science and Technology with Special Emphasis on Environment" at Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 19 to 22 December 1992. We welcome the conclusions and recommendations adopted by that meeting, which are covered in the report of the Secretary-General, and appreciate particularly the valuable contribution made by the participating organizations and the agencies of the United Nations system to the success of the meeting. The next general meeting between the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations is expected to take piace in Geneva early next year. In the meantime, let me assure the Assembly that the Organization of the Islamic Conference is fully conscious of the financial constraints on both organizations, and, therefore, our cooperation process takes that factor into account.

The draft resolution before the Assembly in document A/48/L.27 of 19 November 1993, which has been introduced in detail by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Representative of the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, reflects the firm determination of the two organizations to go ahead with cooperation in several fields.

In view of the fact that the draft resolution has no additional financial implications, I am confident that it will be approved unanimously by the membership of this body.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Assembly that action on draft resolution A/48/L.27 will be postponed to the morning of Wednesday, 24 November, as the last item.

AGENDA ITEM 43

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/475 and Add.1)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.23)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.23.

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) *(interpretation from French):* It is a great pleasure for me to speak today as Chairman of the Group of African States on a question to which the delegations on whose behalf I am speaking attach great importance.

At the outset I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which is a new milestone in the positive development of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The follow-up and encouragement of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity has been provided by the General Assembly since 1965, through the regular adoption of specific resolutions on the matter. But this exercise cannot be reduced to a mere ritual, since it so expressively reflects the various stages of contemporary African history and the various manifestations of multifaceted continent-wide action organized with the help of the United Nations. The important reference point of decolonization has proved its worth in cooperative relations between the United Nations and the OAU, which form an exceptionally strong umbilical cord and support for the particularly fruitful complementarity of regional and international efforts to achieve a common goal.

Therefore, going back over the history of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU since that cooperation began is, in the present conditions of profound change in international relations, a way to consolidate gains and, on the foundation of shared experience, to build new aspirations. The pan-African organization will thus, with the help of the United Nations, deal with the exigencies of a single continental destiny and make its contribution to meeting the great challenges that face the international community as a whole.

At the same time, while the renewed interest in multilateralism is giving the United Nations ever more numerous and complex missions, of ever increasing scope, consideration of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU fits naturally into the enormous question of the need to strengthen the framework of international cooperation for universal peace and development, through an effective partnership, both between States and between world and regional intergovernmental organizations.

In this context, the Organization of African Unity, which at its inception inscribed in its charter its faithfulness to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, can be seen as an especially well-suited partner for effective cooperation with the United Nations to make the African continent an outstanding example with regard to the prevention and settlement of conflicts and regional economic recovery and integration in a context of global economic growth.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity has, to its credit, yielded worthwhile results. Thanks to the perseverance behind this cooperation, which is moving it towards new horizons, considerable progress has been made over the past year. The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations gives a comprehensive overview of the diverse and numerous fields of cooperation. However, it also reports on shortfalls and the wide range of tasks yet to be accomplished, the problems of Africa being so many and so complex.

Some political successes have been scored. The peaceful dismantlement of apartheid and the establishment of institutional machinery opening the way towards a transition to a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is a superb example of cooperation between the two Organizations. But that should not make us forget the political instability, the persistence of old hotbeds of tension and the emergence of new crises, all of which give rise to grave situations that highlight the vulnerability of a continent whose efforts at recovery are slowed down by ravages of man or nature. One need look no farther than Africa's sad record in the matter of numbers of refugees and displaced persons to be convinced of the need for the international community to give the African continent special consideration.

In these circumstances, for cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to be effective it must not only help in responding to Africa's urgent, priority situations and needs, but also give a vision of the future role a stable and prosperous Africa would play on the international stage.

Africa's energies are today directed to peace, development and democracy. It is clearly demonstrated by the democratic experiments proliferating throughout the

continent, at a pace dictated by specific local circumstances, by the conclusion and forthcoming entry into force of the Treaty creating the African Economic Community, and by the establishment by the Organization of African Unity Heads of State and Government last June in Cairo of a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, that the African countries and their continental organization have undertaken to be the masters of their own destiny and to create the conditions for a better future. But the fact remains that economic and social burdens and weaknesses are slowing down the impetus.

Indeed, despite the enormous sacrifices made by the African countries in bold economic reform processes, the continent's situation is more precarious than ever. Economic recovery and development in Africa are still seriously hampered by the continued decline of commodity prices, the heavy burden of foreign debt, the negative transfer of financial resources and the shrinking of financial flows and direct investment, all compounded by the harmful effects of natural disasters, such as the scourge of desertification and the ravages of locust infestation.

We must therefore redouble our efforts and do everything possible to strengthen and give new impetus to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the economic and social spheres. The United Nations medium-term plan rightly places Africa's economic recovery among the highest priorities for United Nations action. We welcome this, and call on all organs of the United Nations system to give due thought to this priority in conceiving, formulating and implementing their programmes and activities designed to benefit the African countries.

Here, it is fitting to underscore once again the particular importance all of us should attach to the firm implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, as a pact of solidarity which should help to lay the foundation for the sustainable development of the African continent.

Draft resolution A/48/L.23 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, which I have the honour to introduce to the Assembly on behalf of the African Group, is a text which attempts to reflect the spirit and objectives of such cooperation. This text is rooted in tradition and reflects the developments that have occurred over the last year while projecting a vision of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU into the future.

Its objective is to take note of Africa's concerns and also to set forth the main lines of cooperation that the Secretaries-General of our two organizations are to implement. Beyond formulations, it is important that Africa's message of hope and of productive harmony in cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, which I have attempted to put forward in this introduction, be fully conveyed by the draft resolution the General Assembly should adopt by consensus on this issue.

Given the proposals for amendment of the draft resolution which were suggested to us by some of our partners, and in the hope of achieving a genuine consensus on this text, I should like to beg your indulgence, Mr. President, and request that you accept deferring a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.23 until a revised text can be introduced, which will be very soon.

Mrs. HASSAN (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My country, which has the honour of being the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, takes pleasure in speaking on this important agenda item concerning cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations.

Egypt, as a founding member of both organizations, and given its conviction of the importance of the roles performed by both, attaches particular importance to the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations and to the positive results that may arise from such cooperation with regard to the achievement of the goals of the two organizations on the political, economic, social, cultural, artistic, technical and other levels.

We have carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/475) and welcome its contents relating to the progress made in the area of strengthening cooperation between the two organizations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/148. We have also studied carefully the report in document A/48/475/Add.1 which deals with the discussions and recommendations of the coordinating meeting between the Secretariats of the two organizations held in New York from 8 through 10 September 1993, as a follow-up to the resolutions and recommendations which came from the meeting of the two Secretariats held in Addis Ababa in 1992.

We should like to commend both reports and the continued efforts deployed by the Secretary-Generals of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity towards the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations. We also welcome the decision by the two Secretariats to expand the scope of their cooperation, beyond the economic and social spheres, to the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping, as well as the promotion of democratization through the monitoring of elections.

Our support for this stems from our conviction that there exists an indissoluble link between the consolidation of peace and security on the international and regional levels and the achievement of sustainable development.

We have also welcomed the joint meeting of the two Secretariats which re-emphasized the need to strengthen their economic and social cooperation in such areas as continuing the progress achieved in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement towards the establishment of an African economic community, following up the results of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, following up the results of the Dakar Conference on African Children and addressing the problems of refugees, displaced persons and issues relating to humanitarian assistance as well as issues relating to the environment and to population problems.

We welcome the contents of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the two organizations concerning the prevention, management and resolution of African conflicts, as was the case in South Africa, Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and elsewhere. We urge a strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. Specifically, there is a need to take advantage of the benefits the OAU derives from its geographic proximity and its knowledge of local conditions and the historic and cultural backgrounds of conflicts in Africa. In addition, the OAU represents the political will of the African peoples and embodies their determination to resolve their conflicts by themselves.

These considerations were the reason for the creation of a machinery for the prevention, management and resolution of African conflicts within the framework of the OAU, in conformity with the Cairo Declaration resulting from the African Summit Conference held in June 1993. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, who presided over the central body of the joint meeting held in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 November 1993, referred to the need to establish close cooperation between the two bodies in this area, in view of the limited resources available to the OAU, on the one hand, and the experience acquired by the United Nations in the areas of peacemaking and peace-keeping, on the other. We should like to seize this opportunity to appeal to the United Nations to encourage and support this new African machinery.

We should also like to declare our support for the recommendations of the joint meeting of the Secretariats of the two organizations to update the cooperation agreements between the two bodies concerning prevention and management of African conflicts. We also support the same meeting's recommendations on the strengthening of such cooperation, while stressing the need for the United Nations to provide the necessary assistance for the establishment of an early warning system within the OAU as well as providing the necessary financial and technical assistance to set up training programmes for OAU staff and cadres in the areas of settlement of disputes and of confidence-building.

We wish to refer to another new field of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, namely the cooperation with the African countries in facilitating and monitoring their transition to multi-party systems, including the monitoring of elections at the request of those countries. We note with interest the paragraph in the Secretary-General's report that notes that the United Nations has handled requests for electoral assistance from 27 countries and that that accounted for about 80 per cent of all such requests received by the United Nations. This highlights Africa's unremitting efforts towards democratization. The Organization of African Unity has participated with the United Nations in monitoring those elections. This has opened the door to cooperation between the two organizations in this important area. We urge the United Nations to provide the required technical and financial assistance in the area of training, so that specialized OAU cadres may perform this important role of monitoring elections at the request of African countries.

When speaking of African disputes and African democratization we must refer to the problem of African refugees, and displaced persons who now number some 6 million. There is a need for coordinating humanitarian emergency assistance in this area. Here we should like to pay tribute to the efforts of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and to its various operational programmes and funds in this field, as well as to the role played by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in coordinating relief to the African countries within the framework of General Assembly resolution 46/182. We call for the consolidation of cooperation between the two organizations in implementing that resolution in Africa, particularly in respect of speedy response to relief requirements in the early stages of emergency situations. There is also a need for raising the degree of preparedness of the African countries themselves to deal with emergency situations. In this respect, we must move from the relief stage to the rehabilitation and development stages. We also call for cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in coordinating assistance to African countries of asylum for African refugees and displaced persons, in implementing the provisions of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and in preparing for participation by the African countries in the Yokohama conference which will be held in Japan next year.

There is an urgent need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in promoting African efforts towards the achievement of sustainable development, given the worsening of Africa's economic and social problems and the slowing down of growth rates in the continent in a manner that exceeds anything that is taking place in any other part of the developing world at a time when many African countries have undertaken ambitious economic reform and restructuring programmes that require vast financial resources and determined efforts to contain the effects of the harsh social results of such programmes.

The worsening of these problems was the reason behind the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. However, that Programme has not been able to prevent the 1980s from becoming a wasted decade as far as Africa was concerned. The faltering international effort to address the continued worsening of Africa's problems in 1980s led to the adoption by the General Assembly of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The New Agenda contains various important elements that are necessary for Africa's economic development, such as economic reform, the encouragement of investment, the development of human resources, dealing with the problems relating to the environment, population, agriculture, rural development, food security, foreign debt, financial inflows, commodities, diversification of African products, cooperation, regional and subregional integration and many others. We have studied the three reports presented by the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in implementing the New Agenda within the framework of item 24 of the General Assembly's agenda and should like to stress the need for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in implementing the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. We should like also to emphasize the important role that the OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) could play in this connection as well as in the follow-up of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which was held in Japan on 5 and 6 October 1993, and the follow-up mechanism referred to in the Tokyo Declaration. The Egyptian delegation attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in implementing Agenda 21 and wishes to commend the efforts deployed by the Organization of African Unity on the one hand and, on the other, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the ECA and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) in this connection.

We should like to commend, in particular, cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU within the framework of the intergovernmental body entrusted with the drafting of an international convention on combating desertification in countries which suffer from drought or desertification. We also commend the efforts of the team of African experts in this respect within the framework of the Organization of African Unity.

Our interest in desertification and soil deterioration issues in Africa embraces another problem, namely locust infestations in Africa and its adverse effects on the environment, agricultural production and food security. We pay tribute here to the important role played by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in cooperation with the OAU and African subregional organizations in dealing with the problem. We seize this opportunity to invite the United Nations to increase its cooperation with as well as its financial and technical support to the OAU in implementing Agenda 21 in keeping with the recommendations included in the Secretary-General's report, with special emphasis on building Africa's capacities together with the mobilization of the new and additional financial resources required for such implementation.

The international economy is now witnessing an increasing tendency towards integration and association. In this context, Africa has given shape to its vision and aspirations with regard to regional integration in the framework of the Abuja Agreement on the establishment of the African Economic Community. The establishment of that community will require great efforts by the African countries and support for such efforts by the international community. We attach great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in mobilizing such international support as well as in disseminating information on the Agreement at the regional, subregional and international levels. The United Nations should also provide technical assistance in the area of formulating the frameworks and programmes as well as conducting the studies needed to establish the African Economic Community, in line with the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report.

Last but not least, we should like to refer to the International Conference on Assistance to African Children, held at Dakar from 25 to 27 November 1992, in close cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. This international meeting resulted in the adoption of two important documents - the Consensus of Dakar and the Plan of Action. These were subsequently adopted at the last OAU summit, which was held in Cairo in June 1993.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendations concerning early implementation of the recommendations of the Dakar Conference - in particular, those relating to public health, education, combating drugs and assistance in caring for disabled and mentally retarded children.

We are at the threshold of the twenty-first century. The international community has but a few years to put Africa in a better position to join the other continents of the world as they enter the new century. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU could play an important role in mobilizing the assistance needed from the international community. Egypt, which currently chairs the OAU, calls upon the United Nations system, including the United Nations specialized agencies and various programmes and funds, to strengthen and intensify their cooperation in order to enable the OAU to increase its participation in the activities of all these bodies in Africa. We call for continued joint coordination meetings between the secretariats of the two organizations and for sectoral meetings in various areas.

We should like to conclude by urging the General Assembly to adopt by consensus draft resolution A/48/L.23 on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU submitted by the African Group.

Mr. MUMBENGEGWI (Zimbabwe): It gives me great pleasure to be able to participate in the discussion on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I should like, in that regard, to convey our warm appreciation to the Secretary-General for the two reports on this subject that are before us.

This debate comes at an opportune time, as cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU - a process that started nearly 30 years ago, in 1965 - has vastly expanded in scope. The United Nations has cooperated closely with the OAU in the areas of assistance to refugees, the decolonization of the African continent, including that of my own country - Zimbabwe - and the efforts towards the total eradication of racial discrimination, racism and apartheid on the continent.

The United Nations has also supported the continent's efforts to promote multilateral cooperation and regional and subregional economic integration among African States. Indeed, as the reports before the Assembly indicate, the majority of the operational agencies, as well as other bodies of the United Nations system, continue their valuable activities on the continent, at both the national and the regional levels.

The past year has been, in general, one of severe and trying social, economic and political crises in Africa. In eastern and southern Africa, the most unremitting drought in living memory devastated the region, resulting in, *inter alia*, reductions of between 50 and 70 per cent in the cereal output of the various countries of the region. Insecurity and civil strife continued to stalk many parts of the continent, with fighting of varying degrees of intensity in such countries as Angola, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and Burundi. There were severe food shortages among millions of refugees and drought-affected and displaced persons in Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Sudan.

The growing magnitude of the refugee problem in Africa poses one of the most formidable challenges facing the OAU and the United Nations today. Whereas, in 1990, there were 5.7 million refugees in Africa, it is estimated that today there are 6 million - 30 per cent of the world's refugees. We wish to express to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) our appreciation for the efforts that are being made, in collaboration with the OAU, to alleviate the plight of the refugees in Africa. Furthermore, we hope that the review that was begun in June 1993, during the fifty-eighth session of the OAU Council of Ministers, with a view to updating some of the provisions of the OAU-UNHCR Cooperation Agreement in order to meet the new challenges posed by refugees and displaced persons in the 1990s and beyond, will be completed at an early date.

When His Excellency the President of Zimbabwe, Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe, addressed the General Assembly on 28 September this year, he welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal - contained in his report "An Agenda for Peace" - relating to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the resolution of conflicts, in peacemaking and in peace-building. Cognizant of the fact that the onus for taking the initiative in conflict prevention, management and settlement in our continent lies on the African people themselves, our Heads of State or Government, at their thirtieth summit meeting, which was held at Cairo in June this year, resolved to create a mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

We are pleased to point out that, in spite of severe financial constraints, the OAU has established a special fund to support its activities in the field of the prevention and settlement of conflicts. Indeed, we are pleased to note that, with a view to putting the mechanism into operation, the organization's central organ held its inaugural ministerial meeting in Addis Ababa last week, between 17 and 19 November 1993. It is our hope that the United Nations will lend its fullest support to the OAU's

mechanism as we are convinced that these efforts are complementary, and not at odds with each other.

Even as I speak of the creation of the mechanism for conflict resolution in Africa, the OAU has been playing an increasingly important role in the United Nations peacemaking and peace-keeping operations on the continent. The OAU has initiated peacemaking efforts and has complemented the efforts of the United Nations - most notably, in recent times, in South Africa, Somalia and Rwanda. The OAU has undertaken peace missions in the Congo, Angola, Liberia and Burundi. It is our hope that, with further concerted cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, these conflicts will be speedily resolved.

My delegation wishes to support, in this regard, the recommendations that emanated from the meeting between the secretariats of the United Nations and of the OAU that was held in New York in September 1993 - in particular, those relating to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building. We wish also to commend the Secretaries-General of the two organizations for their regular consultations aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa.

We from the African continent are fully cognizant of the need to achieve sustainable development and growth through self-reliance and interdependence. As the *World Economic Survey 1993* correctly points out, African leaders:

> "have renewed their commitments to strategies and measures to accelerate economic integration." (*E/1993/60, p. 87*)

These measures include production, institutional and infrastructural harmonization between neighbouring States, market integration through trade liberalization, streamlined payments arrangements and currency convertibility.

Thus, when we in southern Africa came together as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in August 1992, foremost among our objectives were deeper economic cooperation and integration, on the basis of equity and mutual benefit, providing for cross-border investment and trade and the freer movement of factors of production, goods and services, capital and labour across national boundaries. It is our hope to achieve complementarity between our national and regional strategies and programmes. SADC, therefore, together with the other regional economic organizations, such as the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union, is one of the building blocks for the continent's ultimate objective: the African Economic Community. We hope to continue to enjoy the tangible support of the international community and the United Nations in our endeavours.

Only two weeks ago the Assembly made a preliminary review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. My delegation took the opportunity then to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the various bodies and organs of the Organization for their efforts to see that the New Agenda was put on a firm and sure footing. But we must reiterate now, as we did then, that the international community has not done enough in its support for the New Agenda. For the New Agenda to achieve its objectives, Africa requires international support which corresponds to its own efforts - support, among other things, with regard to increased official development assistance flows, foreign direct investment, a comprehensive and lasting solution to the continent's crushing debt burden, and an improved external environment, particularly with regard to commodity prices and international market access.

Let me conclude by recalling the Secretary-General's words when he addressed the Panel of High-Level Personalities on African Development on 28 December 1992, in Geneva:

> "Africa and its resources, notably its human resources, are of enormous potential. The end of the cold war allows us to think afresh: to recommit ourselves to the social and economic development of the continent, and to reappraise our approach." (*Press Release SG/SM/4887, p. 2*)

We fervently hope that the consolidation of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity will further buttress this recommitment.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

That the European Union is committed to regional cooperation has been amply demonstrated. Suffice it to recall that in 40 years the European House has grown from six to twelve, evolving from a Coal and Steel Community into a Union which officially entered into force on 1 November last. Through many different agreements, the European Union has close political and economic ties with virtually all regions of the world. More specifically with regard to our relations with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Union had occasion to meet

the Secretary-General of the OAU, Mr. Salim Salim, and to have an important dialogue with him last June in Copenhagen.

We can therefore only commend the efforts of the Organization of African Unity which, while continuing its work to strengthen the political and economic independence of its members, is also trying to increase cooperation between them. This cooperation, which is in keeping with the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace deserves the full support of the United Nations. It illustrates the principle, which we support, that the countries most directly involved are in the best position to find a solution to their political, economic, social and environmental problems.

Accordingly, the European Union welcomes the establishment by the OAU last June in Cairo of a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa. That decision was based on a clear awareness, reflected in the Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU that:

> "No single internal factor has contributed more to the present socio-economic problems on the Continent than the scourge of conflicts within and between our countries." *(A/48/322, p. 107, AHG/DECL.3 (XXIX) Rev.1, para. 9)*

Within the framework of this mechanism the OAU intends to coordinate its activities with those of regional and subregional organizations and neighbouring States while, where necessary, also having recourse to United Nations assistance.

The European Union welcomes and supports this double approach: internal coordination and cooperation with the United Nations. Indeed, we think that very often that is the best way to guarantee regional peace and security.

This dual approach has already been applied in Rwanda, with encouraging results. The European Union welcomes the conclusion of the Arusha Agreement, which is to lead to free elections in Rwanda. We pay tribute to the ceaseless diplomatic efforts of the Tanzanian conciliator and the activities of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. We hope that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) will be deployed without delay and will be able to help to establish an atmosphere of trust between the Rwandese parties, which is indispensable for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in that country.

In other parts of Africa the international community has made great peace-keeping efforts. In addition to Rwanda, the United Nations is present in Western Sahara, Liberia, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola and South Africa. About half of the peace-keeping operations decided upon by the Security Council are in Africa. Unfortunately, while some of these operations seem to be on the right track, in others the results achieved so far have not measured up to our hopes.

In Western Sahara, we recall our support for the settlement plan for the holding of a self-determination referendum organized and supervised by the United Nations, in cooperation with the OAU. We renew our appeal to the parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative and to refrain from any action that might hamper swift implementation of the plan.

In Angola, UNITA's refusal to accept the outcome of elections certified to be generally free and fair has plunged that country into widespread violence once again. The European Union hopes that the Lusaka talks begun by the Secretary-General's Special Representative will lead to a rapid solution to the Angolan crisis through negotiations carried on within the context of the "Acordos de Paz", with full respect for the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

In Mozambique, after a difficult beginning, implementation of the General Peace Agreement, signed at Rome on 4 October 1992, was given fresh impetus when the Secretary-General visited Maputo, as clearly indicated in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the subject. We earnestly hope that the important agreements achieved on that occasion by President Chissano and the head of RENAMO, Mr. Dhlakama, which involved such matters as a new timetable, will be scrupulously adhered to, particularly in respect of demobilization and the electoral process. Also, full heed must be paid to the appeal the Security Council issued in its resolution 882 (1993) for help in ensuring the success of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ). We rely on a favourable response by Members of the United Nations to the Security Council's appeal in its resolution 882 (1993) to contribute to ensuring the success of UNOMOZ.

In Liberia, we encourage all parties faithfully to implement the Cotonou Agreement and to participate under the conditions it sets forth in the interim institutions that will administer the country pending elections.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's most recent report on Somalia. It shows clearly that, despite the

considerable success of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) in many respects, and in most of the country, Somalia is now at a crossroads. We hope that the increasing importance given to the political process, to the establishment of district and regional councils and of a local police force will promote the reconciliation and recovery agreed upon at Addis Ababa in January and March this year. But true national reconciliation must involve disarming the factions; otherwise the efforts of the United Nations and the international community in Somalia could be gravely compromised. We reaffirm that in the final analysis it is the Somali people themselves who are responsible for their future. They must manifest the political will necessary to resolve the Somali crisis. In that connection, the conference that is to begin on 29 November at Addis Ababa could give Somalis the opportunity to reinvigorate the political process that the international community strongly advocates.

Mr. Kabir (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In South Africa, we warmly welcome the successful conclusion of the multi-party negotiations and the agreements on an interim constitution, on an independent electoral commission, on an independent media commission and on an audio-visual authority. This constitutes a historic milestone on the road to true democracy in South Africa. The European Union has already begun its preparations to help in the process that will culminate in democratic elections on 27 April 1994. The European Union also understands that South Africa's transition to democracy must involve its economic reconstruction and development. We reiterate our determination to make an appropriate contribution to that process.

Citizens of European Union members participate in all the United Nations operations in the countries I have mentioned. The European Union and, on a bilateral basis, some of its members are providing assistance to the countries where those operations are taking place.

Since the late 1980s there has been a huge movement of political, social and economic reform in Africa; this could lay the foundation for a more open society able to determine its own future. We pay a tribute to the Africans and the African political leaders who have taken the path of democracy. In some countries the process of democratization has been interrupted, but we can only welcome the successful referendum in Eritrea, which gave birth to an independent State and put a peaceful end to a 30-year-old conflict. We are also gratified at the peaceful and effective way in which the referendum in Malawi was carried out.

In that context, Burundi is a particularly tragic case. Five months after that country's first free and democratic elections, an attempt at a *coup d'état* brutally shattered the movement towards openness and national reconciliation that had been so nobly undertaken by President Ndadaye. The European Union will support OAU initiatives to enable the legal authorities to resume governing Burundi.

The European Union will continue to help African countries in encouraging democracy. At the Community level and at the level of its member States, it has demonstrated its readiness to respond favourably to requests for assistance in verifying elections. The European Union will also continue to help Governments encourage good public-affairs management and respect for human rights.

We believe that the development process requires the establishment of free, democratic institutions, participation by the people, and the solution of Africa's grave economic problems. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General states that

> "There can be no flowering of development without ... democratization. Peace is a prerequisite to development; democracy is essential if development is to succeed over the long term". *(A/48/1, para. 9)*

We are pleased that a consensus is emerging on full respect for universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms and on the establishment of a pluralistic society and a governmental system responding to the wishes and needs of the people. We hope the OAU will continue to strengthen that consensus. We reaffirm our commitment to helping African countries in this process.

Although it possess abundant resources, Africa continues, alas, to face serious economic problems. It confronts a drop in the flow of private resources, including investment; growing populations; problems of indebtedness; and disasters such as drought and desertification - not to mention the internal conflicts and civil wars about which I have just spoken.

The European Union will cooperate with all relevant organizations to promote economic growth and development in Africa. In that connection, we attach special importance to cooperation with the OAU and to that organization's contribution to intra-regional cooperation in Africa. Let me recall the close links binding the European Union with the States members of the OAU through the Lomé Convention and the new Mediterranean policy. On the strength of its own experience with economic integration, the European Union

welcomes the prospects of integration opened by the Abuja treaty.

Indeed, Africa remains the focal point of European policy with respect to cooperation. The recent Tokyo Conference provided a fresh opportunity for the European Union to emphasize the priority the international community gives to development in Africa. Some countries, battered by civil wars or other conflicts, have especially large requirements. Last May, the European Union decided to put in place an Initiative for Africa of at least 100 million European Currency Units; this will finance rehabilitation projects in a number of African countries. The Initiative will support aid measures to be inserted between humanitarian assistance and long-term development programmes.

Two problems are of particular concern in that respect. The first is population growth, which hampers improvements in the standard of living in Africa. The Cairo Conference on Population and Development will enable us to give more thorough consideration to this problem; for the present, we must recognize that the link between population and development is crucial for Africa.

The second problem is the situation of the least-developed countries, some 30 of which are African countries. Many continue to bear a heavy debt burden. The European Union strongly supports the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. In the Lomé-Convention programmes and in the bilateral programmes of members of the European Union, specific attention is given to the fight against poverty. That priority is testimony to our desire that development budgets should remain intact.

The European Union believes that the OAU will continue to play an important role in African and world affairs, in keeping with the principles of the Charter and in cooperation with the United Nations. We believe that the ties of friendship and cooperation binding the members of the OAU to the members of the European Union will continue to develop in the years to come.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, I now call on the Observer of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. SY (Organization of African Unity (OAU)) *(interpretation from French)*: Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which has been continuing since 1965 when the first cooperation agreement between the two organizations was signed, has today entered a new phase. Traditionally confined mainly to economic and social affairs, this cooperation now involves new areas such as preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and democratization.

The interdependence of peace, democracy and development is better understood today. The increase in new kinds of crises in this initial post-cold-war era has made it necessary to have closer and more consistent cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Thus, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/148, the United Nations and the OAU have been cooperating in trying to settle several conflicts in Africa.

In Rwanda, the United Nations took over from OAU cease-fire observers when the peace process required the sending of a peace-keeping force in order to encourage implementation of the Arusha peace agreements, which had been signed under the auspices of the OAU.

In Liberia, the United Nations and the OAU acted together through their respective representatives to bring the parties to the negotiating table and to promote implementation of the Yamoussoukro IV Accord. These efforts led to the signing of the Cotonou Agreement on 29 July 1993, which has started the peace process moving again. Here we would appeal to the international community to contribute to the trust fund established under the auspices of the Security Council. Without such support, any peace process will become increasingly fragile.

In Somalia, the two organizations have consulted regularly during the various phases of the Somali crisis. The OAU emphasized the search for a political solution and participated actively in the national reconciliation conference that was held in March 1993 in Addis Ababa.

Similarly, in South Africa, representatives from the OAU and the United Nations are working closely together in trying to promote the transition to a non-racial, democratic, united society.

Such cooperation has been useful in advancing the cause of peace in these conflicts. It is, however, desirable that this cooperation be further strengthened and better sustained, so as to deal more effectively with the problems relating to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Such a development is all the more necessary in that the Secretary-General, in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277) and in other documents, has reconfirmed his resolve to work closely with regional organizations.

For its part, the Organization of African Unity has demonstrated the same resolve. For example, the Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the establishment within the OAU of a mechanism for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts, adopted last June at the thirtieth anniversary of OAU, emphasized that the OAU should

> "cooperate and work closely with the United Nations not only with regard to issues relating to peacemaking but, and especially, also those relating to peace-keeping. Where necessary, recourse will be had to the United Nations to provide the necessary financial, logistical and military support needed for the OAU's activities in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa in keeping with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter on the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security." *(A/48/322, p. 113)*

Moreover, the Secretary-General of the OAU, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, described his vision of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in his response to the statement by the President of the Security Council on ways and means of strengthening regional organizations and arrangements with a view to maintaining international peace and security more effectively. He stated:

> "It is the understanding of OAU that the coordination of the efforts of regional organizations with those of the United Nations, in the context of pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations, implies that that relationship must be conducted in such a way that the comparative advantage of the regional organization, on the one hand, and that of the United Nations on the other hand, optimally come into play. Thus, though OAU recognizes that the United Nations, being the World Body, has the primary responsibility for international peace and security, and that it is endowed with greater material and financial resources, OAU brings to such a partnership, its political salience as the pre-eminent, continent-wide regional organization in Africa, deriving from its proximity to and better knowledge of local African conflict situations, the shared historical experience and culture of its member States and the political will to resolve its own problems." *(S/25996/Add.3, para. 11)*

Motivated largely by those considerations, the last inter-Secretariat meeting of the United Nations and the OAU, held from 8 to 10 September 1993 here in New York, formulated important recommendations. In the area of preventive diplomacy, it recommended that the United Nations assist the OAU in establishing an early-warning system, and that the two organizations develop training programmes on dispute settlement for their respective staff. It also called on the United Nations to try to mobilize the necessary financial and technical support to develop the institutional ability of the OAU secretariat to prevent and handle conflicts.

The United Nations-OAU inter-Secretariat meeting recommended that the two organizations should regularly carry out joint peacemaking and peace-keeping activities in Africa. The United Nations was invited to contribute to mobilizing financial and logistic support for OAU activities in order to restore and maintain peace, and also to help the OAU organize training programmes for the military staff of its member States that might be involved in peace-keeping missions.

As to post-conflict peace-building, the inter-Secretariat recommended that the OAU and organs of the United Nations system cooperate to establish economic and social infrastructures in respect of demobilized combatants, displaced persons and refugees.

Another priority area for the Organization of African Unity, and an area of increasingly steady cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, is the promotion of the democratization process. In July 1990, the Heads of State and Government of the OAU, in their Declaration on the political and economic Situation in Africa and fundamental changes in the world, defined the OAU's position on democratization. In that Declaration they affirmed, *inter alia*, the right of African countries to determine, in all sovereignty, their democratic systems on the basis of their socio-cultural values, taking into account the realities of the situation and the need to ensure development and meet the basic requirements of the people.

Since the adoption of the Declaration, the OAU secretariat, which is deeply interested in democratization, has been following very closely developments in member States and sending observers to various elections. So far, observers have been sent to more than 15 members of the OAU to follow the process of presidential or legislative elections or referendums.

In some cases, the OAU has sent observers to assist the member States in establishing the preconditions for holding elections. Thus, the OAU recently contributed actively to organizing and holding elections in the Congo.

However, in order to meet the growing needs of its member States, the OAU needs to strengthen its structures and train professional staff in this area. The OAU, which is already cooperating with a number of international institutions and organizations, expects to develop its cooperation with the United Nations. This cooperation, moreover, has already begun, with the holding of the elections in Mali, Eritrea and Togo.

Generally speaking, the OAU would like its cooperation with the United Nations in observing elections to make it possible for there to be exchanges of information and training of staff, for the OAU member States to be provided with technical assistance and for there to be harmonization and cooperation in the field.

The efforts of the OAU to prevent, manage and settle conflicts in Africa and to promote a process of harmonious democratization are designed, among other things, to create a political environment at the national, regional and continental levels that would foster development and economic growth. In effect, the OAU, which has almost completed the tasks allocated to it in the area of the struggle against colonial and racial domination, has decided to move decisively towards resolving economic issues, and has taken initiatives to encourage the adoption of policies that favour popular participation in economic development and an increasing pace of economic integration.

Thus, since the Abuja Treaty - which established the African Economic Community - was signed, the OAU secretariat has been working away on developing protocols to be annexed to it and has waged a campaign to inform African and international public opinion about it. The OAU has also continued its efforts to encourage its member States to ratify the Treaty promptly. At the present rate at which ratifications are taking place, the Treaty will enter into force very soon.

The OAU, which is cooperating closely with the United Nations - particularly with the Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Development Programme - in order to make the provisions of the Abuja Treaty operational, would wish the bodies and institutions in the United Nations system, first, to include in their national and regional programmes activities that would strengthen regional cooperation and integration; secondly, to try to coordinate their programmes between themselves and also with the programmes being carried out by the African Economic Community and the other regional and subregional communities; and, thirdly, to support the carrying out of studies and the implementation of the protocols concerning the African Economic Community.

Another issue that the OAU is following very closely is the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The OAU, while taking note of the initiatives taken by the United Nations - and by the Secretary-General in particular - to increase the international community's awareness, would, however, like to stress that wide-ranging action must be taken to ensure that the additional resources requested under the New Agenda are mobilized, and that measures must be taken to bring down the barriers to African economic recovery, for example, debt, the drop in primary product prices and problems of access to markets. I should like to point out in this connection how crucially important diversification of the African economies is, and how important is the need for the international community to underpin that process, specifically by supporting the establishment of the fund for diversification proposed by the Secretary-General.

United Nations-OAU cooperation covers several important sectors. In the social field, the OAU collaborated with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the Economic Commission for Africa in organizing the third African conference on population. Similarly, the OAU, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), organized the international conference on the African child, which has helped make the international community aware of the problems being faced by African children and has adopted major decisions, including the Dakar consensus and a plan of action to implement it.

These, then, are a few of the elements that I wished to raise in support of what was said this morning by the Chairman of the Group of African States and by the representative of the current Chairman of the OAU.

I should also like to take this opportunity to appeal to the various delegations to support draft resolution A/48/L.23.

I should not like to finish without thanking the Secretary-General for the efforts he has made to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, for the steps he took in organizing the September 1993 meeting, and, lastly, for the high quality of the documentation.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Assembly that action on draft resolution A/48/L.23 is postponed to a later date, to be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.